

Teaching Gender: a phenomenology of gender in schools and four modes of  
transformation

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## Dedication

This work in total is dedicated to Gray, as well as all the community around Gray that shows them that change is possible each and every day.

## Abstract

In this dissertation, I offer three chapters on the varied and partial realities of gender at work in schooling. This post-intentional phenomenological research project collects data from both collective and individual interviews with fellow queer teachers, as well as personal reflections and theoretical review. Through analysis of this data, the text aims to get smarter about our resistance to gender oppression in schools. Employing the experiences of research participants as well as a statistical review on the experience of queer youth from Human Rights Campaign, chapter one is a pragmatic address to what teachers must know and do when it comes to gender in schools. Chapter two relies on conversations from feminist marxism to articulate the sexist exploitation of teachers, as visibilized by the teacher role during the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, inspired by the call to change that chapters one and two both offer, chapter three articulates four different modes of change that we ask for and enact when resisting oppression. In total, the objective of this dissertation is to represent multiple and partial considerations on gender in schools and urge further research in the ways we discuss how gender is lived out in school spaces.

Key Words: gender, queer youth, sexism in the teaching profession, teacher education, feminist marxism, resistance and oppression, philosophy of education

## Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	v
Introduction to the Project.....	1
Chapter 1.....	16
Chapter 2.....	50
Chapter 3.....	68
Conclusion to the Project.....	94
Bibliography.....	100

## List of Figures

Figure A.....	25
Figure B.....	26
Figure C.....	27
Figure D.....	29
Figure E.....	29
Figure F.....	36
Photograph 1.....	41
Photograph 2.....	42
Photograph 3.....	43

## **Introduction to the Project**

I had set the year 2020 aside to study how gender functions in schools as part of a research project in philosophy of education. Now halfway through the year 2021, I can laugh at the simplicity of my research proposal crafted in late 2019. I had no idea then that the following year in Minneapolis, MN where I live would be gripped by the global covid-19 pandemic and subsequent upheaval through the Minneapolis Uprising against racial injustice and following the police murder of George Floyd.

To study gender, I had proposed to employ a kind of phenomenology (post-intentional phenomenology) which commits to allowing a phenomenon to reveal itself to you. With this method, the philosopher/researcher is an agent of investigation, yet the phenomenon has a say as well--the philosopher/researcher is not fully in control. I venture to bet that the year 2020 taught many of us that we are not fully in control.

Thus, my dissertation research began in one form and transmuted over the course of three chapters. The focus shifted over 18 months from being primarily concerned with what was wrong, concerning and harmful when it came to gender in schools, to eventually, what is possible, what can be and what change looks like. It began with a group interview project, conversations with fellow queer teachers over shared meals, and then thrust into isolation mid-March with the rest of the world, ends with a meditation on the shape of change in a world that we are transforming actively and robustly.

The evolution of this project is an honest investigation into gender in schools over the specific context of the past year and a half. Gender, gender expression, a sense of belonging for queer youth in schools, the rights and lives of LGBTQIA2+ teachers, the statistics which illustrate continued gender oppression, as well as our demands for a



better future are indubitably tied up with our present reckoning with American racism and police brutality, as well as a global economic crisis following a public health pandemic which disproportionately marginalizes people socialized as women and demands unprecedented labor from teachers. Gender functions in school as racialized, hierarchical, exploited, commodified, and yet *still* also as a place of creativity, resistance and solidarity.

In this dissertation, I aim to illustrate those complexities as they have come to find me over the past 18 months. Each of the three chapters in this dissertation are the result of interpretive research on gender and education. Data collected to interpret into the final product (these three chapters) came from a variety of sources. I am particularly indebted to my five community members/research participants who sat down to eat dinner with me and offer their stories and perspectives on the needs of their students and themselves. As a collective, we were able to share three group meals together that effectively produced the “must-knows” and “must-dos” for teachers that are included in Chapter 1 through iterative conversations over these data collection meals<sup>1</sup>. Our collective shared many conversations on the desire to humanize the teaching profession, so that the whole selves of teachers have a sense of belonging in the classroom and curriculum--this emergent theme served as the jumping off point for Chapter 2 on teacher exploitation. In addition, I got the chance to share food with each participant individually as they relaid personal stories from their own experience as a queer youth in schools and what they would have needed from their own teachers at that time. Perspectives from these one-on-one

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<sup>1</sup> See Combahee River Collective “Kitchen Table Methodology” for comprehensive articulation of the practice of sharing food in community as research practice. I base my own research methods here from their radical research lineage articulated in “The Combahee River Collective Statement” (1977), *Available Means*, University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 292–300.

meetings began thematic nodes of alienation and belonging, as well as exploitation and humanization that were combined with textual analysis to inform both chapters 1 and 2. There was a three month pause between the writings of chapters 1 & 2 and the final writing of chapter 3. During that time and as part of the post-intentional phenomenological process, I experimented with a variety of interpretive techniques that led to the focus of the final chapter being on change. For example, during the three month writing hiatus, I abstained from looking in any mirrors in an attempt to practice embodiment and my own corporeality of gender in resistant ways. During this same period I continued to teach high school English, but now online during the Covid19 pandemic, and was afforded the necessity to connect with my students in ways where they were in complete agentic control of their own gender presentation in the classroom (through the use of memoji character drawings replacing the black squares of zoom.)

Ultimately, it was through participation in civic and direct action in protest movements over this past year and half in both the local Black Lives Matter and the Stop Line 3 movements that led me to building a philosophical model for change in chapter 3. If my time getting to know gender in schools has taught me anything, it is that much change is needed. Not one kind of change, but specific, multiple, collaborative and imaginative kinds of change. As a part of these movements, my friends and community taught me that protest is inherently hopeful. If there is no sense of belief that acts of protest will engender transformation, then why march? Why blockade? Why build? I am equally indebted to the many persons in my life who show me change is possible and prescient, should we just open, act, demand and imagine.

### **Research Design**

While the state of the world in 2020 certainly directed the final year of this research project in unpredictable ways, the research design for the first three months followed the data collection protocol outlined in my proposal at the end of 2019. The research design greatly impacted the final text produced. In this following sub-section, I will clarify the data collection process.

### **Methodology**

In this research project, I called upon the research methodology of Post-Intentional Phenomenology with commitments and research methods inherited from feminist and queer phenomenological theory. I aimed to practice the five methodological pillars of Post-Intentional Phenomenology from *Crafting Phenomenological Research* (Vagle, 2014). Vagle reminds that the five “steps” of post-intentional research are not necessarily to be followed chronologically, but rather constantly and recursively returned to over the course of research (p. 121). These five recursive pillars are:

- Identify a phenomenon in its multiple, partial and varied contexts
- Devise a clear yet flexible process for gathering data appropriate for the phenomenon under investigation
- Make a post-reflexion plan
- Read and write your way through your data in a systematic, responsive manner
- Craft a text that captures the phenomenon in its multiple, partial and varied contexts

#### ***Identify a Phenomenon in its Multiple, Partial and Varied Contexts***

Gender was identified as the phenomenon of study early on in this research

project timeline, with particular interest in how gender is experienced by students and teachers in schooling.

***Devise a clear yet flexible process for gathering data appropriate for the phenomenon under investigation***

A clear yet flexible plan to gather data was proposed in 2019. Further details on how the methods of that plan were enacted are included here:

**Settings and Participants.**

My participants were 5 self-elected queer bodies in heteronormative school buildings. While we assumed that all individuals have an understanding of their own gender, tapping into the lived experience of queer embodiment of gender “looks behind the table,” as Sara Ahmed puts it in *Queer Phenomenology* (2007), or seeks to queer the frames from which we gaze and notice individuals and communities that have been historically marginalized. Queer Teachers are intermediaries. They were once queer youth with insights on the experience of gender at that time. They are now trained teachers and understand the limitations and opportunities of the profession.

All participants know each other and have overall positive relationships with one another, demonstrated by electing to spend time together outside of contracted work time. Positive relationships of participants is a major contribution to comfort of participants as they answer questions about their own lived experience of gender, as it is tied up with other identities, such as sexual orientation and racialization. Privacy was ensured through no identifying information being collected as data. In addition, the recordings of all interviews were destroyed after transcription and any person-identifying information was redacted from transcripts.

## **Methods.**

Within this post-intentional phenomenological study, the “little m” research methods to collect data on gender in schools included focus group interviews with these five teachers, one-on-one interviews, written narratives<sup>2</sup> and a personal practice of post-reflexing from myself, the researcher.

### ***Focus Group interviews.***

Over the course of three months, there were three group interviews, or focus groups. Each group interview lasted between two and two and a half hours. At each of the two group interviews, food was provided for research participants<sup>3</sup>. The participants were given discussion questions that they were encouraged (both verbally and written on the questions themselves) to stray away from at will. The group interviews were recorded, then transcribed with identifying information redacted. Semi-structured interview questions were written based on the identified phenomenon for this research project, gender, particularly as it is experienced by students and teachers.

### ***One-on-One Interviews.***

In between the group interviews, there were also one-on-one interviews with participants. For the one-on-one interviews, participants were asked to bring a short (.5-1 page) narrative to work through during the one-one-one interview. This “working through” is an adaptation of Collective Memory Work devised by Friga Haug and focuses on questioning how the writer is constructing themselves in the narrative (Haug, 1987).

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Collective Memory Work narrative data and discussion method (Haug, 1987)

<sup>3</sup> The decision to provide food was based on inclusion of care and harm reduction in feminist research methodology practices (Devault, 1996) as well as the model of collective writing provided by the Combahee River Collective Statement.

### *Narratives.*

Participants were asked to write based on the following prompts:

Narrative Prompts: \*Again, please feel free to write about whatever memory you feel compelled to share. These are just some jumping off points...\*

1. Think of a time when you experienced *someone telling you what it means to be your gender* in a school/ schooling, or, how you weren't allowed to be that gender, and describe that in as much detail as possible.
2. Think of a time when you experienced *belonging* in a school/ schooling and describe that in as much detail as possible.
3. Think of a time when you experienced *yourself as silent in school/ schooling* and describe that in as much detail as possible.
4. What do schools look like as sites of healing?

Both the participants' written narrative product as well as the process of discussing the narrative data was analyzed and influenced the final crafted texts.

### ***Make a Post-Reflexion Plan***

#### **Post-Reflexing Plan.**

Post-Reflexing is a term used to describe the practices of troubling a researcher's own orientations toward a phenomenon of study in post-intentional phenomenology. Vagle (2014) summarizes this practice as “looking at what we usually look through” (p.131). More concretely, this looks like developing a plan to reflect routinely on how I connect with and/or disconnect with data, assume normality, interrogate our own bottom lines of perceptions and beliefs and confront moments when I am shocked by what I observe (Vagle, 2014). Post-reflexing is one key distinction of post-intentional

phenomenology from its phenomenological predecessors--that the researcher, thinker, ego is not separate from the lifeworld of study and cannot be bracketed “away.” There are however, technologies of bridling (Dahlberg, Dahlberg and Nystrom, 2008) or self-observation that are generative in the dance toward returning to the “things themselves” (Husserl, 1931). For this project, my self-reflexing plan included 1) writing an initial post-reflexion statement, 2) keeping a post-reflexing journal to write in before and after interviews, as well as during data analyses.

### **Addendum to the Plan.**

In addition to these practices set out in the original research proposal, I was also eventually led to collecting family photographs as a practice of reading my own orientations to the phenomenon of gender, in addition to abstaining from looking in the mirror for three months. The addition of these post-reflexing practices spawned from a desire to practice post-reflexing in embodied ways, not only the verbal and written ways that I had committed to in my post-reflexing plan. Data collected from these additional Post-Reflexing practices were integrated into the final text.

### ***Read and Write Your Way Through Your Data in a Systematic, Responsive Manner***

#### **Transcriptions and Analysis.**

Transcription of all interviews took one month. As I transcribed, I noted both emerging themes (multiple stories and ideas that shared emphasis or concern), as well as divergent themes (when stories and ideas stood out from the collective). These themes, with excerpts from the transcriptions that exemplified them were then catalogued for use and representation in the final drafted text. After the completion of the final focus group,

according to the method of Post-Intentional Phenomenology, I analyzed the data according to how the phenomenon (of gender) called to be analyzed at that time, using both the emerging themes from the research participant interviews, as well as the context of the world, which included the covid19 pandemic and a nationwide demand for change toward racial justice.

### **Participant Feedback.**

After a gathering of emerging and divergent themes and remaining questions I wanted to follow, I asked for input from all research participants on how well they thought the emerging themes captured our conversations from focus groups. I again asked for research participant feedback after the formal articulation of the must-knows and must-dos in chapter 1. Feedback from participants was integrated into the final text.

### **Use of Participant Transcription in Text**

After the transcriptions from the group interviews were transcribed, I searched for shared and divergent themes that directly informed the first chapter of this text and went on to inspire the second and third chapters. This looked like my physically printing out the transcripts on one sided paper, cutting up excerpts and making small piles of these excerpts around my desk that related to one another. One large pile was made up of stories of alienation that my participants shared. Another large pile were directives--most of these excerpts began with phrases such as "I just wish all teachers could see..." or "If only the school could communicate *x* to students." This pile of directives became the must-knows and must-dos presented in chapter one. Due to the iterative nature of the group interviews and the role of participant feedback, I was able to cultivate a clear group of these must-knows and must-dos from the team of research



participants. For example, some directives and prescriptions for teachers that came up in focus group number one were then brought back to the table a month later for dinner number two; I asked participants: how do we feel about these directives and prescriptions now? Through this process, the data from focus group participants that began this research project directly informed the content of the first chapter.

There were two more large piles of paper-cut-out excerpts that came to provide inspiration for chapters two and three. Another large pile of excerpts narrated experiences of teacher exploitation. These excerpts shared experiences of being silenced when speaking out against administrative choices, underpay, overwork and the exclusion of the whole person as teacher--ultimately, the demand for teachers to be teaching machines, not humans that also come with communities, histories and identities. This emergent theme inspired my concern with teacher exploitation that I explore in chapter two. Coincidentally, two months after data collection ended, the Covid19 pandemic began. With the closure of school buildings across the country, the shared experience of exploitation that the teacher participants narrated gained unprecedented volume. So, although I was no longer in intentional and iterative conversation with my participants at the time of the beginning of Covid19, their reflections on their own exploitations still inspired chapter two and the philosophical review for that chapter.

The largest pile of excerpts by far however was a collection of demands for change. The most common phrase transcribed in 3 group interviews and 5 1:1 interviews was “something has to change.” Something had to change when we were recounting incidents sexual assault in the school where we all taught. Something had to change when we discussed multiple participants’ shared experience of being forbidden

or deterred from “coming out” at school/ affirming their queer selves at school. Something had to change when occasions of racist homophobia from fellow teachers went unaddressed from administration. This demand for change was clear, although what that change looked like was left unclear. After the onset of the Covid19 pandemic, Minneapolis, MN where we reside also became an epicenter of uprising against racial injustice following the police murder of George Floyd. Protests in our streets demanded change, believing change is possible. Our city council gathered in Powderhorn Park to promise a new community safety model for our city. The calls for change from the teacher participants echoed in the demands for change that now saturated our city. This was how a shared theme from the teacher focus group (of change) came to inspire the third chapter in building out a philosophical model for what we mean when we demand change.

In chapters one, two and three, I do not invoke excerpts from the transcriptions of my participants. I briefly engage two excerpts from my participants in the conclusion to demonstrate emergent ideas from the focus group interviews that I do not feel were fully integrated into the whole body of the rest of the text. Otherwise, each small and large pile of excerpts directly informed the text (in the case of chapter one) or inspired my further study (in the case of chapters two and three). My aim here was to produce a text that captures the multiple, partial and varied manifestations of the phenomenon of gender in schools and I am indebted to my research participants for moving me closer to that phenomenon in ways I could not access alone.

***Craft a Text that Captures the Phenomenon in its Multiple, Partial and Varied***

***Contexts***

Following this introduction, there are three chapters elucidating concerns of this project as they have emerged, followed by a conclusion. The three main chapters are:

- Chapter 1 - Gender in Schools: What teachers must know and do when it comes to gender, sex traits and sexual orientation.
- Chapter 2 - Teachers as Housewives and the Covid-19 pandemic
- Chapter 3 - Demonstrating Change: Four modes of transformation that we demand in the art of resistance

The first chapter, *Gender in Schools*, primes the teacher candidate on how American education presently fails queer youth, as illustrated by profuse statistical evidence. Then, given this situation, addresses what teachers must know and do when it comes to gender, sex traits and sexual orientation. The chapter concludes with photographs of gendered artifacts from the past 10 years of my own teaching to provide pragmatic and contextual examples of gender oppression in schools, and with those examples, provide opportunity to practice the must-knows and must-dos outlined in the chapter.

The second chapter, *Teachers as Housewives and the Covid-19 pandemic*, connects the role of the teacher in American public schools to the role of the housewife in the social factory, as analyzed by Silvia Federici, Angela Davis and Nancy Fraser. The chapter contends that the recent Covid19 pandemic has further revealed the role of housewife that was designed for the American teacher from conception of the normal school. Through articulation of the similarities of struggle between feminized professions against prevailing and systemic sexism, we can make humanizing choices as we ask the teacher to return to the classroom during and after the Covid19 pandemic.

The third chapter, *Demonstrating Change*, offers a philosophical model of transformation by articulating four distinct modes of change. The four modes articulated are changes in: attitudes, embodiments, politics/organizations, and, epistems/imaginaries. As we work toward building more affirming and freer schools for our young people, I argue grappling with the delineation of what change looks like will help us get smarter about our resistances and transformations.

One way to think about how these chapters contribute to one another is in focus. The first chapter focuses on the outcomes of queer student experience in schools. The second chapter focuses on the outcomes of teacher working conditions as defined by teaching as a feminized profession. The third chapter focuses on thinking through change in meaningful ways, given that chapters 1 & 2 make the case that much change is needed in our schools when it comes to gendered oppression and exploitation. Another way to think about how these three chapters contribute to one another is in tone. The first and second chapter, guided by the articulations of my community members/research participants, are heavy--they mean to communicate a sense that all is not right in teaching and learning when it comes to gender and sexual orientation in schools. While the third chapter is hopeful. My aim is that in concert, these three chapters illustrate both the heavy and the hopeful, both a difficult reality and a determined imagination of changes to come.

Yet another way to think about how these chapters contribute to one another is in audience. Chapter 1 is written for teacher candidates training in a teacher preparation program and most likely cramming lots of theory into their brains. It is meant to be assigned reading in tandem with gender theory relevant to schooling, such as Baum &

Westheimer<sup>4</sup>, Mayo<sup>5</sup>, Butler<sup>6</sup>, Beauvoir<sup>7</sup> and Lorde<sup>8</sup>. Chapter 1 means to offer pragmatic examples and some 101 basics on gender expression that my cohort of research participants greatly influenced. I hope to be clear in the first chapter that these 101 basics are a very small and incredibly limited jumping off point for teacher candidates beginning to investigate their own relations and expectations when it comes to gender in the classroom. Chapter 2 is written for the American public or anyone who can call their local, state and federal representatives to demand changes in education policy. It is for all parents, families and communities involved in discourse about the roles and rights of teachers during the covid19 pandemic. Finally, chapter 3 is written for philosophers of education. This term I mean broadly and literally. Chapter 3 is written for philosophers by discipline, teachers who by necessity are constantly philosophizing, my family, chosen family, neighbors and the community of Minneapolis as we demand very real changes to our public works and city ethos after the murder of George Floyd.

A final way to think about the ways these three chapters contribute to one another is in scope or container. The first chapter considers the phenomenon of gender in action in the classroom. The second chapter considers how the classroom and the role of teacher were built, and furthermore as visibilized in Covid, how they continue to function. In this way, chapter 2 is the container that holds what we are trying to make sense of in chapter 1. While chapter 3 asks us to set the classroom aside for a moment as we try to make sense of different kinds of change. It is through this act of setting aside and imagining

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<sup>4</sup> (Baum & Westheimer, 2015)

<sup>5</sup> (Mayo, 2007)

<sup>6</sup> (Butler, 1988)

<sup>7</sup> Specifically the *Introduction* from *The Second Sex* (Beauvoir, 1954)

<sup>8</sup> Specifically three chapters noted in Bibliography from *Sister Outside* (Lorde, 1984)

what change may look like that I hope we can place the container of the classroom within the larger and boundless perimeter of our imaginaries.

In total, this meditation on gender aims to craft a text that captures the phenomenon of gender in its multiple, partial and varied contexts. The three chapters move from a focus on the gender oppression causing harm in schools, through the unique position of the exploited teacher in this situation of continued harm via sexism, racism and transphobia, and finally, toward a meditation on change to come.

### **Closing Thoughts**

Thank you for the time and attention you have extended to these three chapters on gender in schools and four modes of transformation. While limited, my hope is that this dissertation can offer varied initiatives to enrich the discussion on gender in schools as the phenomenon of gender comes to bear on students, teachers and future possibilities of transformation.

## Chapter One

*Gender in Schools: What teachers must know and do when it comes to gender, sex traits and sexual orientation.*

It is an understated assessment to contend that our schools are failing queer youth. Human Rights Campaign and researchers at the University of Connecticut found that 77% of LGBTQ teenagers surveyed report feeling depressed or down over the past week and 95% of LGBTQ youth report trouble sleeping at night. LGBTQ youth of color and transgender teenagers experience unique challenges and elevated stress -- only 11% of youth of color surveyed believe their racial or ethnic group is regarded positively in the U.S., and over 50% of trans and gender expansive youth said they can *never* use school restrooms that align with their gender identity. More than 70 percent of queer youth report feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness in the past week and 67% report that they've heard family members make negative comments about LGBTQ people. Only 26% of queer youth surveyed say they always feel safe in their school classrooms and just 5% say all of their teachers and school staff are supportive of LGBTQ people.

As a teacher in public education for 10 years, a teacher educator for 5 and a student for over 25 years, I have encountered gendered violence toward my students, my colleagues and myself on more occasions than are bearable to recount. In this chapter, I introduce the phenomenon of gender in schools. This phenomenon is significant because of the catastrophic magnitude of gendered violence in United States schools (as demonstrated in the statistics included), as well as the multitudinous opportunities for resistance that getting smarter about gender in schools may perhaps offer us.

In this chapter, I aim to offer basic preparation and practice for affirming gender inclusiveness, expansion and transcendence for teachers and teacher-educators. The preparation and practice content is distilled and abridged from five interviews with queer teachers, a statistical analysis from third party survey data, a literature review on gender in schools, as well as reflections from my own experience as a queer teacher.

This chapter on Gender in Schools contains three sections. In section one, I will provide a brief snapshot of how American education presently fails queer youth, as illustrated by profuse statistical evidence and then situate the teacher in this illustration. In section two, I will address what teachers must know and do when it comes to gender, sex traits and sexual orientation. Section three concludes the chapter with photographs of gendered artifacts from the past 10 years of my own teaching to provide pragmatic and contextual examples of gender oppression in schools. My aim is that these example photographs of classroom content provide an opportunity to practice the must-knows and must-dos articulated in the second section.

### **A Snapshot of Gender in Schools**

In this section I will further illustrate gender in schools as represented by survey statistics from queer youth. Then, I will connect the teachers' influence on these statistics to locate the role that teachers play in affirming gender in schools.

#### **As Represented by Statistics**

Violence and feelings of unsafety in and around schools have been extensively documented by researchers, yet student and teacher bodies are still under threat. 73% of LGBTQ+ youth report being verbally harassed or threatened because of their identities



(Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2018). A staggering 1 in 4 college-age women report being sexually assaulted (Cantor, Fisher, Chibnall, & Townsend, 2015) and 23% of women and 14% of men experience intimate partner violence before the age of 18 (Center for Disease Control, 2017). Black teenage women are disproportionately suspended and expelled from school, this push-out catalyzes adolescent homelessness and arrest (Morris, 2018) and the criminality of black, masculinized bodies is an epidemic that endangers the bodily safety of school-age young men on a daily basis (Muhammed, 2011).

When we talk about violence in schools toward *queer* youth; young, black *men*; and, *women* in domestic partnership, the site of this violence is a gendered body as it is lived out inseparable from race, class, language, dis/ability, sexual orientation, religion and other socialized identity markers. Gendered violence in schools is a problem that impacts every single school in the United States. We know that the safety of students from violence is fundamental to their ability to learn, contribute to society and self-actualize. Therefore, it is the moral imperative of education researchers, teachers and citizens alike to work toward both safer and more affirming schools for our youth. Yet what impact do teachers really have on gender oppression in schools? We know institutional racism, domestic violence and discrimination are larger than our school system. So, what role can teachers play in making schools safer places for queer youth?

### **The Role of the Teacher in this Statistical Snapshot**

The image illustrated by these statistics is heavy to carry, but an important place to start. This portrait captures the point we have come to in education research regarding gender in schools: there is copious documentation of the consequences of gender

oppression in schools. In addition, there are very helpful toolkits already built for teachers, such as GLSEN educators resources<sup>9</sup>, The Safe Zone Project curriculum for teachers<sup>10</sup> and Teaching Transgender Toolkit<sup>11</sup> that provide basic training on topics like pronouns and bathroom policy (or as Laverne Cox phrases it-- the right to exist in public spaces). Many of these resources are compiled through organization such as Venture Out<sup>12</sup>. Yet, how do we as education researchers move forward from documenting oppression and reducing harm toward new ways to question gender socialization as a whole? How do we set our sites beyond surviving school to thriving in school with pluralistic and affirming attention to the individuation of gender and sexual orientation? Gendered violence takes many forms. The statistics on violence presented above are a brief and stunted snapshot of some of the material consequences of sexism and homophobia compounded with racism in US schools. This chapter proposes to begin by moving closer to one particular statistic--that 5% of queer youth “say that all of their teachers and school staff are supportive of LGBTQ people” (HRC, 2018). There is a lot to unpack within this fragment.

I’d like to draw our attention to the role that teachers play in this 5% statistic. The Human Rights Campaign and University of Connecticut demonstrate that a very small percentage (5% of LGBTQ youth surveyed) feel that all their teachers at school are supportive of LGBTQ people. While educators do not necessarily hold the greatest influence over a student’s media and news consumption nor their family life--we do, as a

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<http://live-glsen-website.pantheonsite.io/educator-resources?gclid=CKC-gdL6-9ICFQhLDQodzCADiA>

<sup>10</sup> <https://thesafezoneproject.com/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.teachingtransgender.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ventureoutproject.com/resources>

community of educators have complete influence and control over how we call each other in toward demonstrative support for LGBTQIA2+ peoples and communities. What would our schools look like if 95% of queer youth surveyed “say all of their teachers and school staff are supportive of LGBTQ people”? The 5% statistic could change to a 95% statistic tomorrow. Or perhaps at least over the next few years as we shift pre-service and in-service teacher education.

As this statistic about teacher support of LGBTQ people is a central concern, please allow us to take a moment to better situate what is at stake in this 5% numerical snapshot and the dream of 95% teacher support of LGBTQIA2+ people and communities. First of all, teachers directly impact this statistic in a uniquely variable-controlling way. This claim about teachers “supporting LGBTQ people” does not necessarily concern students’ peers or family. This is a claim about teachers and how teachers show up for students and provide classrooms of belonging instead of alienation at school.

Second, if we think about the language of this claim--that teachers support LGBTQ people--not certain legal demarcations such as “same sex” marriage, but the people themselves--their existences, this seems particularly consequential. While there are many contributing factors in adolescent well-being, the difficulty of queer youth to sleep at night or the report that a majority of trans youth of color attempt suicide before the age of 18 has to do with the ability of LGBTQ people to exist freely. Teacher support, affirmation and embrace will positively impact the well-being of queer youth.

Third, in teacher education, this is something we can impact and change over the course of 1-5 years through a comprehensive push to talk, act and organize on behalf of affirming gender in schools. Since teachers are the major contributing factor, it is possible for an overhaul in teacher education to address gender, sex traits and sexual orientation to greatly influence the sense of support and belonging of queer youth. There is great potential here for teachers to show up, act as co-conspirators with, and support queer youth.

Lastly, it seems important to note at this point, that when we were talking about queer youth, a sense of safety and belonging as a minoritized group is self-evident, no matter how large the group in reference. However, notably 25% of youth between the ages of 13-19 identify as part of the queer community (GLAAD, 2019). So, when we are talking about a marginal percentage of queer youth believing their teachers support their existence or write large the existence of LGBTQ people, this casualty of care impacts a quarter of the present student population. I hope I convey how huge, pressing and potential it is to transform the 5% statistic to a 95% statistic. In fact, the aim henceforth in this chapter is to strategize ways that teachers can practice showing up for students, so that 95% of queer youth surveyed “say all of their teachers and school staff are supportive of LGBTQ people.”

### **What do educators need to *know* when it comes to gender, sex traits and sexual orientation?**

If we now know our goal, then where do we begin? How should teachers get started in affirming inclusive and diverse gender representation in the classroom? In this section, we start with a self-reflective practice that aims to prime us to answer the

question: what must teachers know and do when it comes to gender, sex traits and sexual orientation?

There is a 9 am summer course in education theory that I have had the privilege to teach the last three summers. Designed for teacher-candidates who will be fully licensed and working teachers exactly one year from the start of the program, the course is spends the first five weeks of their training covering all socio-historical foundations of education, as well as contemporary implications of oppression in schools, such as but not limited to systemic racism and homophobia. The course has a long, esoteric name about human relations, but in casual conversation, I fondly refer to the course as “101 how to be less racist and homophobic as a teacher.” In the course, which should be longer, should be set up over the course of the whole program, should be required at both the beginning and the end of the teachers’ education, should be taught by multiple different instructors with multiple different positionalities, we begin our first conversation about gender with a personal activity about *home*.

Reading, writing, learning about gender cannot be abstracted away from our own bodies. No matter how canonical the philosophy used or how institutionalized the learning process, when we learn about gender, we learn from the site of our own gendered bodies, our perspectives shaped by the undercurrent of gender that permeates society. Both Freud and Lacan claimed that to know one's gender is to know reality (Grumet, 1988). So, in sense-making about the ways gender is taken up, proliferated, reified, transgressed in schools, it is impossible to leave our own engenderization behind; it is the lens through which we see and experience the world around us.

To this end, I ask you to pause your skimming, step outside the text and respond to the journal prompt below for 3-5 minutes of writing. I encourage you to set a timer and to keep writing until it goes off instead of ending when you feel you have written a response.

- Writing Prompt: *On a notecard or half sheet of paper, please describe where **home** is for you, perhaps what it smells like, tastes like, looks like, sounds like, feels like, etc. Illustrate it in small and large fragmented details.*

This is the part where you start a timer and write. 3-5 minutes of writing.

At this point in the summer course, three volunteer students will collect all the note cards from around the circle. I ask the three students who have collected the cards to shuffle and redistribute the note cards, reading aloud each card before they hand it off to a peer. When three people are reading out loud at the same time with brief pauses to hand out a card and move on to the next, we--the class--can't quite hear every word from each student's description of home, but we can still pick up many words, a phrase here and there, a mood. At the conclusion of the cacophony, each student has another student's description of home in their hands. Whenever I have another person's sensory illustration of home in my hands, I always feel very grateful that a person would share something so intimate with me, even though it is anonymous, the generosity and trust always strike me. Some past note cards have looked like:

➤ *Home*, Sample A: "Home is where my family is. Right now that is credit river township in the house I grew up in. My mom, dad, and dog Murphy are always there and even when they aren't I can sense them. I smell my mom in the clean laundry and pene-rol and hear my dad in the hum of power tools and cheering of NFL football. I see

my dog in her treats and toys and the fresh outdoors of the backyard. Here I am comfortable, worry free, and home.

➤ *Home*, Sample B: “Home is many places. Maybe four. But there is a continuous kind of light. Light coming through the curtains off my grandfather’s patio in Los Angeles. Light in the grass in the backyard of the midwest. The way the tops turn to yellow in August. Home smells like the dust of my aunt’s basement as my cousins drink root beer over ice and gossip. Home tastes like the ocean, like oysters in a bar with my father. Home feels safe, knowing, holding.”

➤ *Home*, Sample C: The warmth of sunlight spilling in through my window, surrounded by my familiar belongings. A place of safety. It doesn’t have to be my permanent place of residence, it can be where my people are or where I choose to stay the night. Often when travelling, home can be a hotel room or a friend’s sofa. It just has to be a space where I can truly exhale and meditate on what I’ve experienced and what I might be able to accomplish tomorrow. The echoes of my home growing are in spanish. The burnt rose petal pink shade of a carpet that is inexplicably 90s. Cafe con leche. Take a moment outside of this text again. Let the sample *homes* wash over you and your own sample home. I ask the summer class; I ask you:

- What is similar here in these descriptions of home? Different? What ideas kept coming up? What surprised you?
- Which one of these note cards has the right recollection of home? The correct home? The best home?
- Do any of them have or remember home in ways that are wrong? Did anyone get home incorrectly?

Take a moment to form your own opinions to the questions above. In class, we usually list some similarities. Food is a common one. Other people are often present. But there are reliably many variants that only appear in one notecard and no one else's. We observe that there are lots of similarities and plenty of differences. The last two questions typically leave the students baffled. Perhaps one phrase jumped out at someone as beautiful. They often try to rephrase and reinterpret my question to "which of these descriptions of home do you appreciate?" But that is not the question--which home is right, which home is wrong--are preposterous questions and the students are always quick to tell me so.

We could analyze these sample descriptions of home in many ways. We could consider the ways that gender is often wrapped up in how we remember home. We could attempt to find a shared feeling that home provokes in us in some essential human way. For now, I'd like to highlight how home can function analogically with gender, as a means to get smarter about the ways we hold space for, investigate and talk through gender in schools. To illustrate further, home is something personal. It is an amalgam of experiences that define an individual and orient the ways that we engage with the world. So too, may we think about gender like home, as individual, often sharing themes (such as home often shares themes of food and other people), but ultimately is enacted through variation and multiplicity. There is no best gender. No way to do gender wrong. Later on in the subsection, *What must teachers **do** when it comes to gender*, sex traits and sexual orientation, we will pick up our journal responses one more time. For now, we can continue on to the "Must-Knows" for teachers and basic vocabulary framing.



These “Must-Knows” are five essential basic premises that teachers must know to better affirm gender in schools. These Must-Knows are not the only knowledge that teachers are obligated to carry to support their students. Neither are these Must-Knows the top most important five premises. What is most important to know as educators is contextual to the school where you teach in the community you are a contributing member of. Furthermore, the Must-Knows will always continue to change. These must knows were formed over dinner and conversation with five fellow queer teachers as they reflected on both their experiences as one queer youth themselves, as well as their experience teaching LGBTQIA2+ students of all genders and sexual orientations. To form the must-knows and must-dos for this chapter, the collective of queer teachers operated as intermediaries between teacher candidates and students, making sense of statistics and survey data through their own dual experiences teaching and learning. There were many more considerations present in the conversations of the queer teacher collective that through iterative in-person conversations over the course of six weeks, were distilled down to the must-knows and must-dos that are presented in this chapter. We viewed these must-knows as simple 101 compulsory habits of LGBTQIA2+ student support. Thus, I present these five Must-Knows as some very basic assumptions, as a place to depart from as we comprehensively push to talk, act and organize on behalf of affirming gender in schools.

**Must-Knows:**

- 1) LGBTQIA2+ folks, queer sexual orientations and gender variance/diversity have existed since the beginning of time in all inhabitable continents around the world. → [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT\\_history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_history)

- 2) All people have a right to self-identify legally (UN - Internationally, Nationally, Statewide and Municipal) → <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- 3) Treating others (including others across difference) with respect is a central tenet of social and religious well-being, including 12-18 major world religions
- 4) Society's ideas about gender, gender roles, biological sex and sexual orientation have changed dramatically over time and will continue to change. (See: Foucault<sup>13</sup>; Beauvoir<sup>14</sup>)
- 5) Everyone has a right to feel safety and belonging when they are at school and educators play *the* key role in manifesting this right

### **Basic Frameworks & Vocabulary**

This vocabulary section aims to provide useful, basic frameworks, vocabulary and resources that can be provided for educators to better serve their students of all genders, and especially LGBTQIA2+ students. However, it is essential to note that the LGBTQIA2+ community is not monolithic, an individual's gender and sexuality are not their sole identifiers and furthermore, what needs to be known about gender and sexual orientation in schools change with “the times.” Therefore the vocabulary in this section must be added to and interrogated critically.

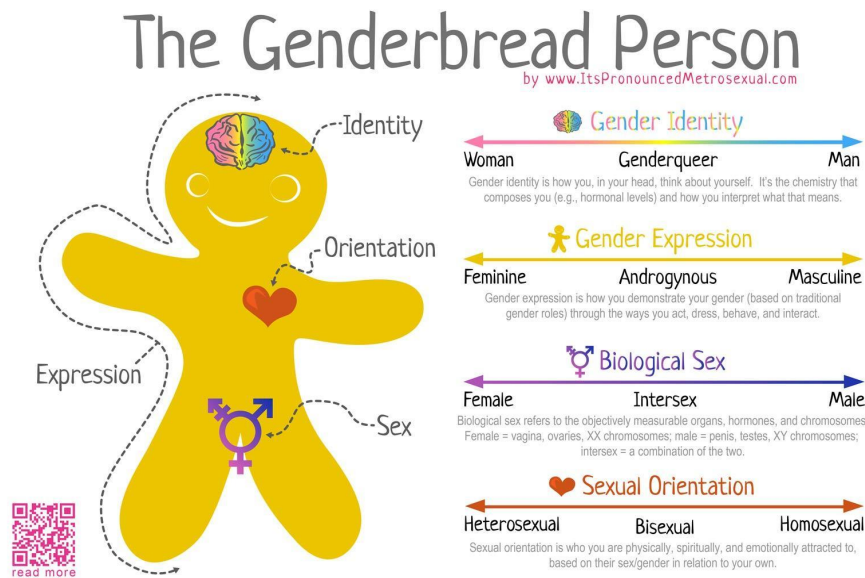
Keeping in mind the imperfection of any explanation of something like gender (that is defined by its multitudinousness, I have often used the following “genderbread” graphic as a jumping off point to discuss key vocabulary in teaching gender and sexual

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<sup>13</sup> Specifically, *A History of Sexuality* by Michel Foucault

<sup>14</sup> Specifically, *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir

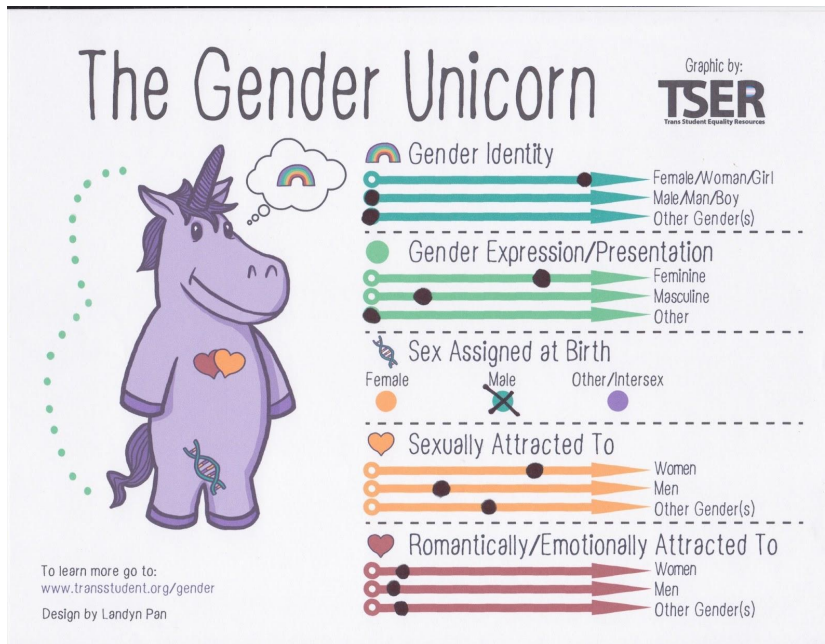
orientation in the classroom:



**Figure A: Genderbread Person**

In figure A., we can see the terms “gender identity,” “gender expression,” “biological sex,” and “sexual orientation.” These terms are illustrated on spectrums. For example, in *Gender Identity* spectrum that is visualized in this graphic, “woman” and “man” are placed on opposite ends of an infinite line with “genderqueer” in the middle.

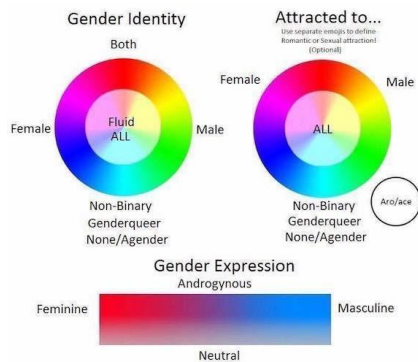
The next image (Graphic B: Gender Unicorn) I vastly prefer over the genderbread illustration, although I find it useful to visualize different ways folks conceptualize and talk through gender. I also find it helpful here to demonstrate how language and understanding of gender change over time, as the genderbread person diagram is a previous edition to the gender unicorn.



**Figure B: Gender Unicorn**

In the Gender Unicorn depiction, we see the terms “gender identity,” “gender expression/presentation,” “sex assigned at birth,” “sexually attracted to,” and “romantically/emotionally attached to.” Note that in general, discussions on “biological sex” have been replaced with the more specific terms such as “sex traits” when talking about anatomy and “sex assigned at birth” when discussing the gender marker assigned to babies in a hospital room, which is still decided by measured length of genitalia (not chromosomes, hormones, organs nor personal identification.) You can see the idea of a spectrum has also been reimagined in the Gender Unicorn depiction. With this visual representation of Gender Identity, “man” and “woman” are no longer posed as opposites on one line, but instead sit next to one another with infinite lines running into the distance. How do Graphics A and B draft gender differently? Where do you find yourself in each of these graphics? Your gender identity? Your sex assigned at birth?

A third illustration (Graphic C: Rainbow Circles) drops any preoccupations with sex as it is assigned at birth and visualizes Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Attracted To on fluid rainbow circles. What does the visualization in Graphic C do to the ways we think about gender? How does it compare to graphics A and B? Where do you find yourself today on this graphic?



**Figure C: Rainbow Circles**

In past workshops on gender, I have often received comments and questions about why we discuss sexual orientation and race when the workshop description listed only gender. There are two important points to be made here in response:

First, gender does not exist separate from other identity markers. No man, for example, exists who is not also racialized (as perhaps white/ inscribed with whiteness) and does not also orient themselves romantically (perhaps identifies as bisexual). This goes on to include religification, ability/disability, language, etc. In another paper, I reference this living out one's gender as interdependently connected as Gender-As-Lived (Taylor and Francis, 2018).

Second, alongside the interconnectivity of identity categories in one lived experience, we must not conflate gender and sexual orientation. To know someone's gender identity does not extend to any knowledge about the same person's sexual

orientation. For example, to know that someone identifies as a man does not mean that one would know this man's pronouns of reference nor their sexual orientation. The categories explored on Graphics A, B, or C are intersecting, sometimes interdependent, but not causal nor binary.

I'd like to challenge us at this point to move beyond the rendered visualization of gender that these graphics provide. How else can we relate to and explore our own gender identities, expressions and sexual orientations? Instead of two categories for gender or even three categories for gender, what about twelve? Like astrological zodiac signs or Myers Briggs personality types? What if we thought about there being as many kinds of gender as there are people on the earth? What kind of shapes and colors could we use to exercise our imagination of what gender could be? Like we did about *home* when journaling? How do we represent gender in ways that might look a little more like how we talk about home--perfectly personal, layered, changing, usually intimate and a gift to share?

Graphic D: *Gender Identity Terms* shows a few of the many words folks use to refer to their gender identities. The pink umbrella represent simply "gender" here, and under the umbrella of gender you find terms like "Non-binary" (when someone does not strongly identify with either binary category of "man" or "woman"), "Cis Male" (when someone who was assigned male sex at birth identifies with that sex) or "Transgender" (a term used in different ways, but largely to signify a transcendence of gender, sometimes the sex assigned at birth as transitioned to affirm someone's true gender identity, sometimes a transcendence away from a gender binary toward an agender, pangender or non-binary identity).



**Figure D: Gender Identity Terms**

The last graphic for this section (Graphic E: The Gender Binary) is a brief and limited depiction of the way that various human attributes (such as “tough” and “sensitive”) are often subconsciously divided into discrete categories along a gender binary that imagines “woman” and “man” to be separate categories in an identity measure that only has two options.

Male	Female	Other
Powerful	Sensitive	Expertise
Commanding	Warm	Committed
Tough	Listens Well	Successful
Emotionally Distant	Admits Vulnerability	Competent
Dominant	Shows Compassion	Experienced
Decisions Driven by Logic	Expresses Feelings	Professional
Forceful	Organized	Tireless
Strong	Caring	
Indifferent	Shows Empathy	
Courageous	Expressive	
Strong Character	Humane	
Task-oriented	Give and Take	
Takes Initiative	Relies on Others	
Autocratic	Amiable	
Loyal	Develops Good Relationships	
Influences Others	Open-Minded	
Gives Clear Instructions		
Confident		
Manages Conflict Well		
Motivates Others		

### **Figure E: The Gender Binary**

You will notice that in the category of “Male” we reserve qualities such as “commanding” and “emotionally distant” and in the category of “Female” we reserve “sensitive” and “relies on others.” It is very important when we learn new words and ideas about gender, that we remember we carry the burden of already present gender expectations and how they reinforce the gender binary. For example, as an educator, am I practicing gender affirming behavior to my transfeminine student if I simply stop maintaining expectations for this individual to be tough and instead now sensitive and organized? No. One goal I have in speaking and writing to the ways that gender is at work in schooling is to actively disassociate the categories of “Man” or “Woman” with certain human attributes and decidedly *not* other attributes.

To this point, I’d like to offer an analogy that helps me think through the ways we over-associate personality characteristics with the categories of man and women. Consider how some people are “left-handed,” some people are “right-handed” and furthermore, some folks are ambidextrous. We can loosely compare this this kind of biological hand favoring with how we commonly conceive of sex assigned at birth. But now, imagine if society augmented meaning attached to left-handedness and right-handedness into two categories of identity: the analytics and the creatives. What if we raised analytic children to play with puzzles and creative children to play with crayons and it was considered shameful to play with the wrong kind of toys? The pathologization of analytics and creatives functions analogically to the ways that we attach personality traits to binary gender identities of girl and boy.

What does it mean pedagogically to respect and engage with the many identities



of both our students and ourselves? How do we hold curiosity for the space in between those identities in ways that does not presuppose what it means to be any one gender? In the next section of this chapter we will explore an educator's "must-dos" when it comes to gender and sexual orientation, but for now it is important to note that I contend that educators ought to know vocabulary and languaging around different gender identities and create a practice that recursively reflects on their own gender identity, as well as space and time to continue learning.

### **What must educators *do* when it comes to gender, sex traits and sexual orientation?**

If I memorize every term for various gender identities and read four different articles from the NY Times about pronoun use--am I done with my gender homework as a teacher? Is that enough to support all my students? No. Knowing things and doing things are connected, but not the same. Furthermore what educators ought to DO is different from HOW they should do it. Therefore, this section focuses on the actions, practices and routines that teachers must take recursively to better support affirming gender in schools.

\_\_\_\_Let us return to the scrap of paper or word document where you previously responded to a writing prompt about home for a second practice of journaling outside of this text. Set aside 3-5 minutes. I ask you to continue writing until your timer goes off instead of stopping beforehand. On the same notecard as your *home* journal or further down in the document, respond to the following prompt:

- Writing Prompt: *Describe one thing you love or really enjoy about your own gender expression. It could be from just today and the way that you are showing up in the*

*world and interacting with others or it could be something that feels like it sticks with you over time. It could be from this past week or season. Maybe describe some way your gender feels, looks like, smells like, sounds like...etc. If it feels good to start with the sentence starter-- "One thing I really enjoy about the way I express my gender is..."--please do so.*

Take a moment now to pause and read back over what you have written in response to the prompt. Below are three sample responses to the prompt on gender from the summer course discussed earlier.

➤ *Gender*, Sample A: "One thing I really like about my gender is that I act like/feel like the "mother" figure for my friends. I'm always asking them if they need anything, making sure they're wearing a jacket when it's cold, etc.

➤ *Gender*, Sample B: "This week is the kind of hot and sticky summer that happens at least once in the season. Wearing tank tops that cut out space for my arms to sun and show new muscles that have been getting stronger and more defined is one thing that I have enjoyed about my gender expression over the past week.

➤ *Gender*, Sample C: "I love being socially afforded the space to explore my emotions. While there are negatives to this, where women might be told they are being "hysterical", I have never had to feel like I cannot live within and express a broad range of thoughts and feelings. Expressing love and tenderness in an earnest manner is something that I am glad I've never had to hide or repress in fear of being too soft. I regret that facets of our society sees this as something that is only reserved for women."

Here we can ask the same questions that we used to approach the journal prompt on home

earlier in the chapter:

- What is similar here in these descriptions of gender? Different? What ideas kept coming up? What surprised you?
- Which one of these note cards has the right recollection of gender? The correct gender? The best gender?
- Do any of them have or remember gender in ways that are wrong? Did anyone get gender incorrectly?

We could again analyze the gender journaling responses in many ways. We could analyze how when asked to write about gender, responses are often tied up with relations to other people and interconnected with other people's gendering. We could outline common themes such as embodiment and expression. However for now, I'd simply like to practice holding the space for the multiplicity of gender shown in these journals like we did for the multiplicity of home, as a way of thinking differently about gender. There is no gender here that is right or wrong or best. There are only individuals in relation with their own gender expression, as shared generously with us. Like home, the depictions of gender are personal amalgams that frame the way these individuals engage with the world. Like home, there is so much joy in gender expression. Throughout this chapter, we have recalled many realities of gendered violence, yet gender is not defined by violence. Like home, gender can be safe, warm, playful and comforting, a stable place to learn and grow from.

Now that we have learned some basic vocabulary and framing for affirming gender in schools, what ought we do with this information? Following are four Must-Dos for teachers. The four Must-Dos are a non comprehensive starting place. I encourage

teachers to start here before stepping foot in the classroom and adding one or two of their own Must-Dos each year in the classroom, as they learn from students, peers and self-reflection:

**The Must-Dos:**

1. Spend time with and really get to know your own gender and sexual orientation, how you came to understand these identities in your life, as well as how your expressions have changed over time
2. Creating saf(er) spaces in the classroom means putting both *preventative* and *reactive* work in
3. “Okay--I believe you.” with words and actions
4. Keep reading, watching, learning

So, looking at the first must-do: what does it mean to “spend time with and really get to know your own gender and sexual orientation, how you came to understand these identities in your life, as well as how your expressions have changed over time?” As a teacher, your students are not the only persons whose gender you are affirming through your gender-affirming teacher practice. You also affirm the gender expressions of your colleagues, families and self. In fact, the affirmation of gender of all these parties is interdependent. Your gender as a teacher and the comfort and intimacy you practice with your own gender greatly impacts your ability to affirm gender around you. There is a useful anthology by *Rethinking Schools* on Rethinking Sexism, Gender and Sexuality (2016) that includes reflections from teachers as they get to know their own gender and in turn show up for affirming all gender expressions for their students. For example, there is

a piece in the anthology by Jay Weber (p. 63) that details the experience of a cis, straight male teacher who changes the lunch box he brings to school with him to a pink Hello Kitty lunchbox and the exploration that follows. Must-Do number one is likewise examining and experimenting with your own gendering. Perhaps this looks like a new lunch box for you that pushes at your gender growth edge. Perhaps this looks like spending 30 days without looking in a mirror, relying on other sensory details to practice daily embodiment. Perhaps this looks like daily memory work journaling about gender and meeting up with an intentional group once a week to work through the journal responses. Three sample journal responses are included below:

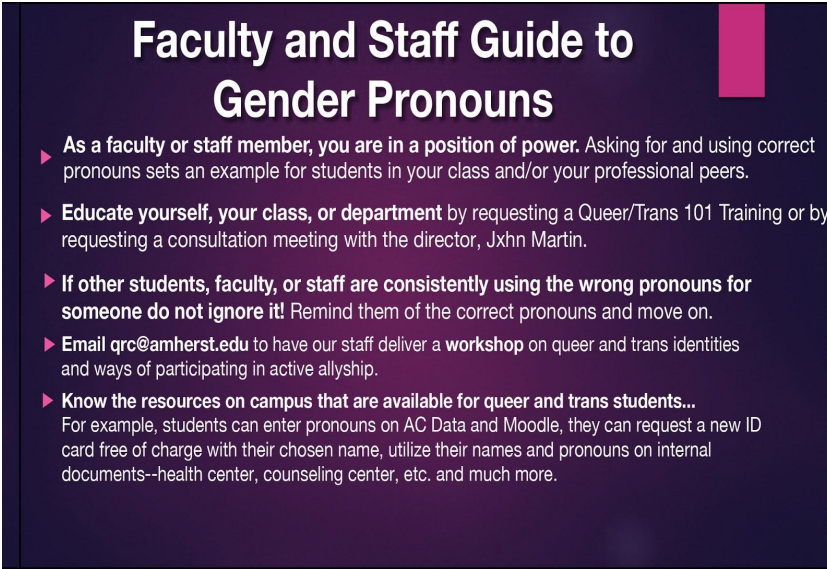
- i. Tell me about a time you realized or learned more about your own gender. It could be the first time someone told you about your gender. It could be from last week and learning something new.
- ii. Tell me about a time you learned about gender diversity, gender expansiveness or the gender binary. Was it from a book? A TV show? A person? What kinds of feelings came up at the time? How did your body feel? How does it feel now remembering this moment?
- iii. Tell me about a time you misspoke or did know what to say or do in a moment where gender came up? What was the moment? How did you feel at the time? How do you feel now? What didn't you know then that you do now?

In summary, learning more about your own gender expressions and how they have changed and will continue to change over time is an integral practice for showing up for students of multiple gender expressions. This practice looks differently for different

folks, but always involves recursive iterations of self-reflection.

Looking at the second must-do: what does it mean to create saf(er) spaces in the classroom by putting both *preventative* and *reactive* work in? Preventative gender homework includes some of the personal work already covered, but also necessitates collaborative preventive work with other teachers, an academic department, school, district or state. Preventative work may look like a school district collaborating with families and students to craft a protocol on gender pronouns. See Sample protocol from

Amherst:



**Faculty and Staff Guide to Gender Pronouns**

- ▶ **As a faculty or staff member, you are in a position of power.** Asking for and using correct pronouns sets an example for students in your class and/or your professional peers.
- ▶ **Educate yourself, your class, or department** by requesting a Queer/Trans 101 Training or by requesting a consultation meeting with the director, Jxhn Martin.
- ▶ **If other students, faculty, or staff are consistently using the wrong pronouns for someone do not ignore it!** Remind them of the correct pronouns and move on.
- ▶ **Email [qrc@amherst.edu](mailto:qrc@amherst.edu)** to have our staff deliver a **workshop** on queer and trans identities and ways of participating in active allyship.
- ▶ **Know the resources on campus that are available for queer and trans students...**  
For example, students can enter pronouns on AC Data and Moodle, they can request a new ID card free of charge with their chosen name, utilize their names and pronouns on internal documents--health center, counseling center, etc. and much more.

**Figure F: Sample Pronoun Protocol from Amherst**

Each year for the past ten years, a teacher or teacher candidate will ask me what to do if hypothetically-speaking a parent of a student demands the child be referred to by their dead name (a name no longer used but perhaps appearing on their birth certificate). First of all, this has never happened to me. Second, I'm not sure what lies underneath this apparently prevalent collective teacher fear. Yet, I can say--that is why teachers have

department meetings, administration, districts and boards. The myth of the singular social justice teacher is a straight shot for burnout city. Something as standard as pronoun use should be addressed school wide and a teacher can employ the school or district protocol when making choices to best affirm gender in their classrooms.

Preventative work also looks like coming up with classroom “group agreements” (sometimes called norms) at the beginning of the year and renewing them each semester with each class. Students, paras and teachers in each class period ought to collaborate on what an affirming classroom looks like and set up group agreements to call one another back in when someone says or does something harmful--which will happen.

Lastly, when harm occurs, having a couple different reactive plans ready-to-go is useful preventative gender affirming work. This might look like figuring out which administrator you can call to spend time with your class when you need to have a call-in conversation with two students in the hallway. It may mean you write brief scripts for moments when you feel obligated to interrupt harmful behavior coming from another teacher, yourself, or a student. This could sound like “y’know what folks--my bad. I don’t like that I just used such gendered language just now. I’m going to go ahead and interrupt myself, go back and try again.”

Reactive work looks like following through with your ready-to-go reactive plans and interrupting gender violence when you see it and hear it. It can also look like checking in with students and staff after an incident and counseling with a teacher/administrator team.

Looking at the third must-do: what does it look like to “Okay--I believe you.” with words and actions? Does the star football player come to school with nail polish--try “I like that color!” Do you have a student who has changed their name used in class twice this year? Great. You memorize, support and don’t need to make a big deal out of it. Are there a group of teenagers in your homeroom that want to dissect everything the K-Pop group BTS has worn on a red carpet? Cool--you should probably look that up, find two outfits that you like and are completely different from one another, get over any impulse you may have to comment on anything remotely related to gender and clothing choices and chime in. Humans have dynamic identities. Turns out, adolescent humans also have dynamic identities and preferences. Say “okay, I believe you” as much as you can in both literal and figurative senses when it comes to gender expression and identity.

Looking at the fourth must-do: what does it mean to “keep reading, watching, learning?” Gender homework for teachers is never complete. The only constant is the availability of resources for teachers to continue to get smarter about gender, sex traits and sexual orientation. The Must-Knows and Must-Dos from this chapter highlight some basic premises to cover before starting to teach, but should be added to and redesigned over years of practice. Creating a reflective routine is essential to this reiteration. Expand media consumption to include movies and TV that includes a diverse representation of queer canon. Work through two teacher toolkits a year. Utilize Harvard implicit association testing to name your biases, as a means of working through and past them. Some resources include:

- Human Rights Campaign: <https://www.hrc.org/resources/2018-lgbtq-youth-report>



- GLSEN: <https://www.glsen.org/educate/resources>
- Great Spoken Word assignment example:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-cYjUCudbA>
- Still love Harvard IAT testing activity<sup>15</sup>:  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>
- Modeling: It's Elementary (1996) film clip (8 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-uMU9BCVO5w>

In summary, American schools are currently failing queer youth. We can transform the reality that only 5% of queer youth “say all of their teachers and school staff are supportive of LGBTQ people” into the dream that 95% of queer youth know that all their teachers and school staff are supportive of them and all LGBTQIA2+ peoples. While there is no perfect algorithm for affirming gender inclusion, expansion and transcendence in the classroom, there are some low-bar basic expectations of Must-Knows and Must-Dos that all teachers can practice. These Must-Knows and Must-Dos will change over time and in context, but through collaboration and recursive self-reflection, we can begin to think through gender in schools in joyful, playful and affirming ways.

### **Learning into Practice**

In the last section, we will practice preventative and reactive gender work in each of these real-life scenarios. My aim with this third section is to provide a pragmatic

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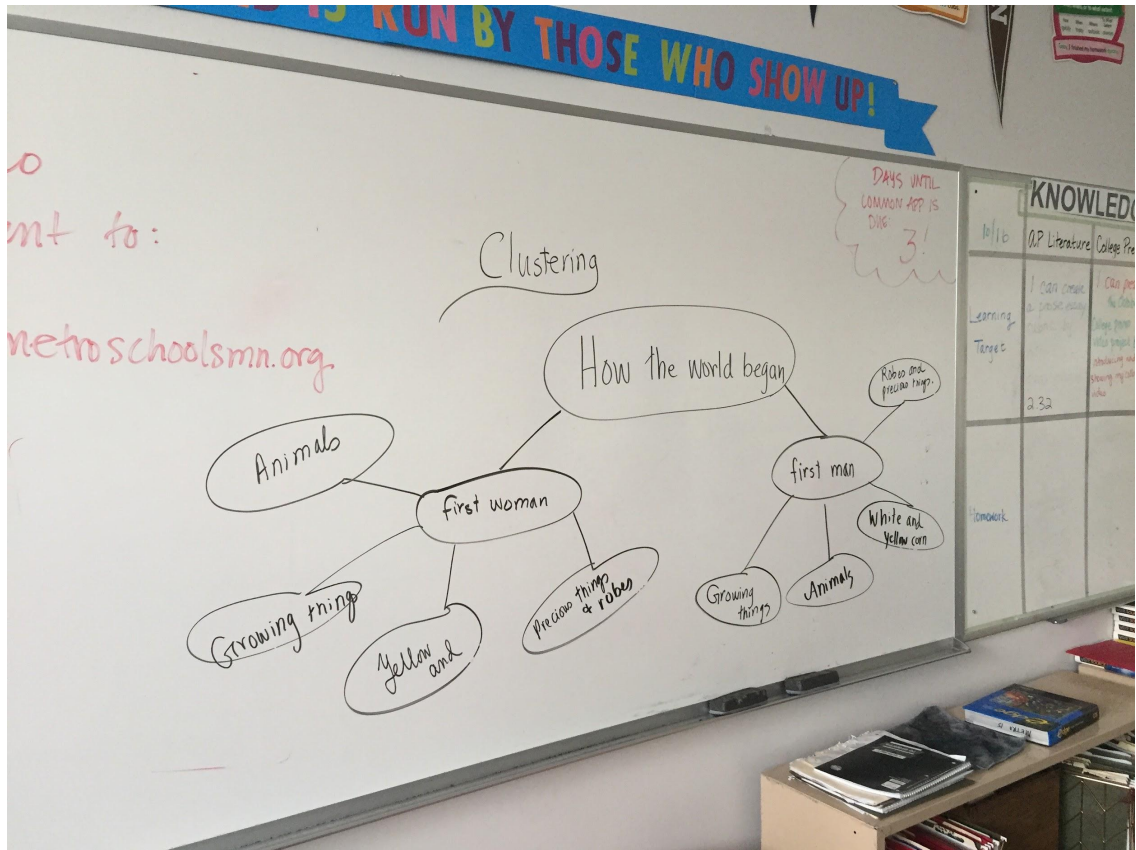
<sup>15</sup> Implicit Association Testing is offered through Project Implicit, a research project hosted by Harvard College.

landscape to ground some of the theoretical commitments we've just made into the space of a classroom to give educators some practice.

Here are some photographs I've taken of gender at work in schools over the past few years. None of the photographs are of people. People are not gender. People are gendered. I'm not sure what the phenomenon of gender *is* and for purposes of this text, it doesn't much matter. Beauvoir, Young, Butler, Lugonés, Anzaldúa, Lorde, Heinämaa are a few of many brilliant philosophers who have written on the nature of gender. This text is framed by and indebted to their work, but does not take up ontological claims on what gender *is*, so much as teleological inquiries of gendered subjectivation. This text proposes to move closer and listen in to the phenomenon of gender to see what it *does*, what it does in schools, how it moves, the impact that it has on youth and particularly on queer youth. Most crucially, this chapter advocates that teachers engage in the constant relearning and unlearning about gender, that we discuss our own iterative must-knows and must-dos to support our LGBTQIA2+ students, that we tell students that we believe them--that they belong here in the classroom--with both words and actions.

These photographs are how it began for me. As a high school English teacher of ten years in four different schools, a teacher educator of five years, a queer person and someone who was once a queer youth, I have just begun to articulate my own subjecthood through the mirrors of my colleagues curriculum and instruction, by what appears on the white boards, in printer trays and in conversations from both the corners and open spaces of school buildings. I started capturing these images with my phone camera before I really had words for why they were important to me or how they

illustrated gender at work. I hope these photographs begin to articulate the prevalence of gendering at schools in harmful ways, as well as empower us to interrupt and resist this kind of prescriptive and binary subjectivation.



Photograph 1.

Photograph one was taken in a classroom where I took my prep hour in the back corner of the room. This lesson was on college note-taking methods, particularly the method of clustering. The teacher demonstrated to the class how to cluster, starting with the largest circle which states “How the world began” and then wrote the phrases “first woman” and “first man” into the carefully divided branches. The lesson here was not explicitly on the gender binary or the story of creation--this gendered material may just have been the simplest way of communicating the curriculum of college note-taking. In

the room when this lesson was being taught, there were at least two students present who personally identify outside of the gender binary, one as genderqueer and another as simply, queer. At the time, I wondered if those students had a chance to belong within this lesson?

**BODY PROGRESS** MONTH / YEAR \_\_\_\_\_

**WAIST**

Week 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 4: \_\_\_\_\_

**ARMS**

Week 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 4: \_\_\_\_\_

**THIGHS**

Week 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 4: \_\_\_\_\_

**HIPS**

Week 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 3: \_\_\_\_\_

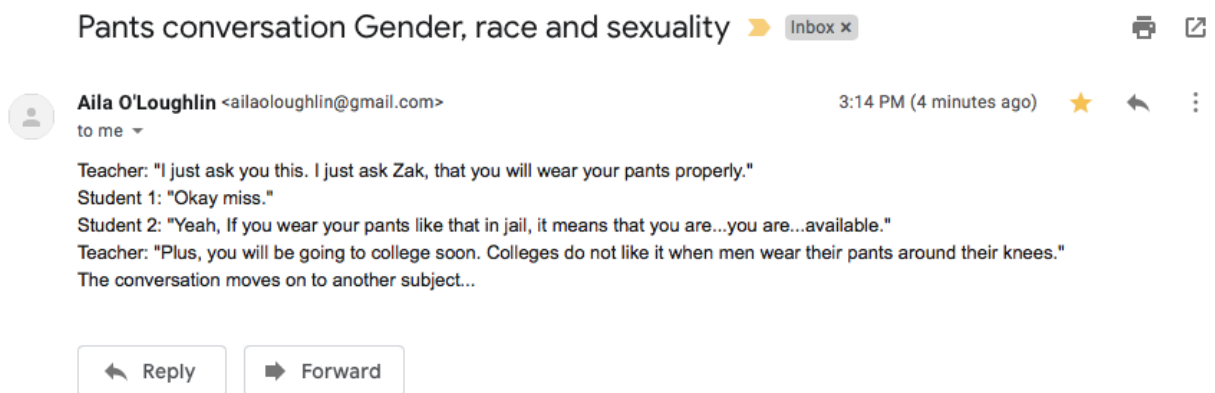
Week 4: \_\_\_\_\_

GOAL TRACKER	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
ARMS				
WAIST				
HIPS				
THIGHS				
WEIGHT				
ACTUAL WEIGHT				

Photograph 2.

I was not present for the delivery of the instructional content associated with photograph two. When printing copies of course material in the principal’s office, which is also the room that houses the printer available for teacher use, I saw this worksheet being printed while I waited for my own materials. I noticed that there were 70-125 copies printed. In the “Body Progress” handout, a feminized body is displayed center.

Body parts named “hips,” “thighs,” “waist,” and “arms” are displayed around the illustration, with what appears to be spaces to track measured difference in those areas over the course of four weeks. In the lower portion of the worksheet, there is a table titled “goal tracker.” Since I was not present during the implementation of this worksheet, I can only make conjectures about its use in curriculum and instruction. In the school where I was teaching at the time, Health class was segregated by the gender binary (not uncommon in secondary schools). I wonder if this worksheet was part of a health curriculum, if it was passed out to “Boy’s Health” as well as “Girl’s Health”? I wonder what the learning target posted at the front of the class was on that particular day? If fat students, hairy students, short and tall students, queer students all felt that their bodies and identities belonged during this lesson?



Photograph 3.

Photograph three is a transcription of a conversation I overheard during a class with 28 students present. I typed this aside between a teacher and two students into an email I had opened on my laptop and sent it to myself as an impromptu record-keeping

method. The class had just been given directions to divide into small groups to work on a class assignment. The teacher raised her voice slightly to be heard above the shuffle of student bodies. She said aloud, “I just ask you this. I just ask, Zak, that you will wear your pants properly.” The student, Zak, lowered his chin and replied “okay Miss” to the teacher before pulling up the waistline of his pants. Another student who was seated near the teacher laughed for a brief moment and then interjected. This interjecting student added, “Yeah, if you wear your pants like that in jail, it means that you are...you are...available.” The teacher looked from the interjecting student to the student of original comment and concluded, “plus, you will be going to college soon. Colleges do not like it when men wear their pants around their knees.”

In this instance, gender is at work in racialized ways that interact and overlap with sexual orientation as well as socioeconomic status. Topics of “proper” (racist) dress code, proximity to incarceration, homophobia, barriers to college access are all wrapped up with the way that this student chooses to live out their gender.

So let’s practice. What would we need already set up in our classrooms and schools to prevent instances like these? What would some useful reactions be? My hope is that the Must-Knows and Must-Dos introduced in this chapter would set teachers up to more keenly notice instances of gender harm as they arise in schools (and in their own teaching), as well as know where to go to gain perspective.

If a teacher has used “first man” and “first woman” to teach the note taking technique of clustering for the past three years, then, prompted by their collaborative teacher gender homework group to journal this week about the gender binary-- I hope that the teacher may be inspired to reconsider the hidden curriculum of the gender binary

in this classroom activity. Getting to know one's own gender and gendering will help teachers to reconsider the ways that gender is frequently taken for granted. Having a department or school protocol on body talk already set up, for example, would hopefully address and prohibit the weight loss handout given to students. Finally, even without preventative gender work, each of these scenarios can be addressed reactively. In the instance where I overheard a teacher and students conversation on wearing pants that connected prison, queerness and sexual assault, the best response I could come up with in the moment was to speak with the teacher after class. At the time, that conversation looked like me beginning with "Something just came up for me that seems really important to talk about. I'm not an expert, but I know it's important." The teacher and I then crafted a plan on how to address the students involved in the conversation and then the class, in case other students had overheard as I did. The teacher who was generous enough to have this conversation with me told the students "I made a mistake yesterday and I'd like a chance to talk through it today." This kind of recursive humility and commitment to continue learning is a teacher practice that will get us to that 95% youth reported teacher support.

### **Implications**

This chapter has taken up a broad and wide discussion on gender and schools. My hope is that we can utilize the survey statistics, must-knows and must-dos and practice examples to feel better grounded in our commitment to show demonstrative and iterative support for LGBTQIA2+ students. The dream is that 95%, or really that 100%, of queer youth surveyed felt that all of their teachers supported their existence, as well as the surviving and thriving of LGBTQIA2+ peoples everywhere.

Pragmatically, I hope this chapter can serve as a tool for teacher candidates beginning to formulate their own must-knows and must-dos when it comes to gender, sex traits and sexual orientation. Are the must-knows and must-dos in the wrong order? Is there a must-know that supersedes all of the tenets presented? Is there new research or an anecdote from your own teaching that comes to bear on these 101 directives? Excellent. We must discuss, push and redevelop our commitments constantly. I also hope that the photographs of gendered artifacts featured in section three can offer practice for in-service teachers as we find words and ways to call in fellow teachers and students when we see gender oppression in action.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter began with a statistical portrait of how American schools are failing queer youth. I hope by the end of it, we have moved to a place of hope and empowerment. Teachers have a tremendous impact on student well-being. Through creativity and collaboration, we can develop routines of self-reflection, gender homework and constant learning. The five Must-Knows and four Must-Dos presented in this chapter are a starting place for that work. In thinking through the three practice scenarios at the end, I hope that you feel prepared to notice and interrupt harmfully prescriptive gendering when it occurs in schools. Instead, may we all feel committed to the goal of transforming teaching to a profession of affirming student belonging in school, as well as armed with some basic frameworks, vocabulary and strategies to get to work affirming expansive and transcendent gender in schools for all our teachers and students.



## Chapter Two

### *Teachers as Housewives and the Covid-19 Pandemic*

There is a memory from last August that I have taken with me all this year. On the first day back to school for teachers in preparation for the upcoming school year, the principal at our high school addressed the whole staff to go over the roles of administrators for the mostly new teachers. When he came to Mr. M<sup>16</sup>, who works the front desk, he paused. After laughing to himself for a moment, he told the whole staff that he wasn't going to call Mr. M the *secretary*, but that he hoped that next year we would have enough money in the budget for "a young woman with a soft voice to be a real secretary." No one laughed. The principal repeated this point a few times and moved on. I left the room shortly after to splash water on the back of my neck in the bathroom. With the principal's refusal to call the person who works the front desk at our school answering phones, the secretary, he explicates the gendered nature of secretarial labor. Mr. M could not be a secretary because secretaries are women and Mr. M is not a woman. Moreover, the principal seemed to indicate that it might be offensive to refer to Mr. M as the secretary, somehow shameful. In this case, then secretarial labor is shown to be both highly gendered and dominated. Similarly, teaching is a highly gendered profession, along with secretarial work and nursing.

In the previous chapter, we explored ways in which gender is at work in schooling. We have this conversation--about gender and schools--from within a container that is a highly and historically gendered place (the classroom) and from a profession that is gendered by design (teaching). This chapter aims to expand the conversation on gender in schools to examine teaching as a feminized profession and the implications of this

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<sup>16</sup> All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of persons.

feminization on teaching and learning today. First, using phenomenologist Madeleine Grumet's documentation of the creation of the American public school, I affirm that teaching is a feminized profession. Second, I argue that this feminized profession is exploited reproductive labor with the help of feminist marxists Silvia Federici and Angela Davis. Thirdly, I rely on Nancy Fraser and Ruth Wilson Gilmore to tie the possibility to exploit teachers to ongoing expropriation.

### **Teaching is a Feminized Profession**

Public Education in the United States was unified in the 19th century by a collaborative of white, upper middle-class, east coast elites (Kliebard, 1987; Watkins, 2001;). The growing industrialization of the United States changed the way we worked and ergo, our educational preparation for that work. With these changes came the formation of the common (public) school. Catherine Beecher was one such prominent figure in the formation of American education, publishing extensively on the role of the teacher and teacher preparation. In 1823, Beecher founded one of the first teacher training academies, the *Hartford Female Seminary*, where women trained to be *both* teachers and mothers. Beecher was a fierce advocate for women in the teaching profession. In *Bitter Milk*, Madeleine Grumet (1988) dives into Beecher's role in the construction of teacher value:

In 1853, in a petition to Congress asking for free normal schools for female teachers, Beecher writes:

To make education universal, it must be modest in expense, and women can afford to teach for one half, or even less the salary which men would ask, because the female teacher has only to sustain herself; she does not

look forward to the duty of supporting a family, should she marry; nor has she the ambition to amass a fortune'...Accordingly, Catherine Beecher argued for placing educational responsibility in the hands of women, maintaining their submissiveness and elevating feminine self-sacrifice, purity, and domesticity into moral superiority that could be dispensed in schools. (p. 39-40)

Beecher's testimony here reveals the invention of the American teaching profession as founded on sexist ideals of justified inequity.

Along with economic benefit, Beecher saw the female teacher as a moral model to students, calling on sexist stereotypes of self-sacrifice and purity (that were enforced through teacher surveillance.) These "feminine ideals" shaped the job description of what it means to teach. Today, the teaching profession is defined by these same 19th century puritanical values of control over women and White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant (WASP) notions of purity. Teachers, defined by their submissiveness and sexist stereotypes were commonly surveilled and managed. Grumet goes on to discuss the working environment of young, women teachers in the beginnings of the common school:

Strictures against marriage combined with paltry salaries limited this work to young, single people who could supplement their pay by "boarding around," the practice that required the teacher to live in the home of one of her pupils where she received food and shelter and constant surveillance. Earning 60 percent less than their male counterparts, female teachers soon began to teach winter school, as well, for their lower salaries made them attractive to employees. (p. 38-39)

The American teaching profession was, from onset, designed based on sexist valuation of gendered stereotypes that were surveilled into place without due compensation. In this way, the ideal teacher was able to assert her authority over the students while still remaining submissive to the more knowing (male) administrative leadership.

This presents a contradiction between the presence of women in teaching and yet the ability to know as a masculinized property. (Feminized) teachers deliver lesson content and discipline measures from (masculinized) school leadership and curricula. Grumet elaborates on this tension:

Nevertheless, the contradictions that evolved in the nineteenth century between the doctrine of maternal love and the practice of a harsh, regimented authority, between women's dominance in numbers and our exclusion from leadership, between the overwhelming presence of women in classrooms and the continuing identification of men as the only persons with the capacity to know, are still present in the culture of schooling. (p. 44-45)

Today, 83% of teachers are white women and only 20% of school principals are women (NCES, 2020.) Teachers who are women are still paid less than teachers who are men. There is no accessible data comparing the compensation of genderqueer and gender non-conforming teachers. As these numbers demonstrate, there has been no revolution since the onset of the American teaching profession--no formal reformulation of teaching and learning that intentionally and actively resists the sexist provenance of teaching. This contradiction is present in our contemporary curriculum, discipline nets, school norms, populations of teachers and administrators, etc.

If we accept Grumet's claim (that teaching is a feminized profession), then it follows that learning is also most likely highly gendered, as teaching and learning co-constitute one another. At the very least, we have plenty of reason to be suspicious of the naturalized attitude toward gender in schools and take up arms against such naturalization. Now, we turn our attention to the implications of teaching as a feminized profession as we outline the nature of teacher work as exploited reproductive labor. Grumet summarizes this connection:

In many ways the temporal structures of teaching resemble the routines of domesticity. Fluid and ubiquitous, housework and children have required women to accept patterns of work and time that have no boundaries. Not surprisingly, it is women who compensate for the highly rationalized and fragmented arrangements of school time and space with our own labor and effort. For those who sustain the emotional and physical lives of others, there is no time out, no short week, no sabbatical, no layoff. (p. 86)

In the following section, we will continue to explore the constitution of teaching "as work and time that have no boundaries," as Grumet phrases it, by drawing parallels between teaching and the Wages Against Housework movement, which demands wages for housewives. I argue the proximity of the housewife and the teacher has been particularly visibilized during the Covid19 pandemic.

### **Wages Against Housework**

The Wages Against Housework movement beginning in the 1970s has much to offer us as we turn a corner into the next (vaccinated) phase of the Covid19 pandemic.

Growing out of feminist organizing in Italy and Great Britain, and eventually expanding in differentiated ways around the globe, the Wages Against Housework (WAH) movement<sup>17</sup> was united by a call to visibilize the unpaid labor of “the housewife.” Some voices within this movement called for government subsidized salaries paid to housewives for cooking, cleaning, raising children and managing the household. Other voices called for an end to housework as we know it as a moral beatitude designated for people socialized as girls and women to fulfill. Angela Davis called for an end to private housework writ large, demanding socialized and accessible domestic labor as a necessary tool for feminist liberation (Davis, 1985, p. 199). Conversations on universal basic income, regardless of gender or household position eventually began to open up new demands in WAH organizing. Yet, within this context-specific differentiation, the core understanding of the role of “the housewife” was clear: the housewife manages the household and raises the children so that “the husband” can go to work--so that he can do his part as wage laborer to accumulate more wealth for the 1%. The housewife too then is a laborer to the benefit of capitalist elites--simply an unpaid one.

Much has changed since the 70s regarding capital, gender and the household. Speaking personally, as the head of household in queer single-parent family, my own experience as both the wage laborer and homemaker does not quite resonate with the illustration of the WAH movement. Notably, the original proponents of WAH organizing were concerned with the proletariat woman in particular. Yet, the American wealth gap has grown in such a dramatic fashion over the past few decades, it is quite rare to find

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<sup>17</sup> Sometimes referred to as the “Wages for Housework” movement, this chapter uses the name Wages Against Housework for two reasons: first, Wages Against Housework is the title of Federici’s treatise on which this analysis relies heavily, and, second, the term “Against” highlights the generative criticism that Angela Davis offers in her critique of the Wages for Housework movement, that in summary, we need not merely compensate private domestic labor, but fundamentally transform the conditions which create an obligation for women to labor privately and domestically.

working class households with only one wage laboring parent and one stay at home parent--the American working class family can no longer survive off of one job. In fact, as a high school English teacher for the past ten years, scheduling conferences with students' families has become noticeably more difficult, as the majority of my students live in households where two or more adults each work two or more jobs.

The world has continued to change, and quickly, with the onset of the global Covid19 pandemic in Spring 2020. When school buildings were shuttered and many parents newly took on double roles as both worker and educator for their children, there was an outpouring of appreciation for the work of teachers. I had never felt so appreciated for the 50-70 hours a week of work I had been practicing as a school teacher for the past decade. Yet, almost as quickly as the outpour of appreciation came, so did the demand for teachers to get back inside the classroom--to take children off the plates and out of the homes of quarantined parents who *just needed to get back to work*. In this way, the role of the teacher as a housewife was revealed. In this essay, I will connect the role of the teacher in the Covid19 pandemic to the role of the housewife outlined in the WAH movement. I argue that through understanding the proximity of the teacher to the housewife, we can make humanizing choices as we ask both teachers and students to return to the classroom during and after this pandemic.

### **The Social Factory**

In 1972 Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James published a pamphlet for distribution that would later become their 1975 seminal text *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*. In it, they outline a key analysis of the "Social Factory"

that is a central tenet in the many manifestations of the WAH movement. Angela Davis summarizes Dalla Costa and James' analysis as revealing how:

Private character of household services is actually an illusion. The housewife, [Dalla Costa] insists, only appears to be ministering to the private needs of her husband and children, for the real beneficiaries of her services are her husband's present employer and the future employers of her children. (Davis, 1985, p. 200)

Using Dalla Costa & James' original argumentation, we can understand "the housewife" is a role defined within capitalist accumulation--a role fulfilled by managing the household duties so that "the husband" can go to work, including child rearing, cleaning and cooking.<sup>18</sup>

### **Silvia Federici**

Silvia Federici expands on Dalla Costa and James' economic analysis of the Social Factory to clarify demands in the WAH movement. In her 1975 treatise, Silvia Federici outlines early connections of housewives and the feminized professions, including teaching:

Whenever we turn we can see that the jobs women perform are mere extensions of the housewife condition in all its implications. That is, not only do we become nurses, maids, teachers, secretaries--all functions for which we are well trained in the home--but we are in the same bind that hinders our struggles in the home: isolation, the fact that

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<sup>18</sup> Contemporary work on Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) expands on Dalla Costa and James' analysis of The Social Factory. The 2017 edited volume on SRT by Tithi Bhattacharya dilates the work of WAH, including specifically addressing the role of teachers as both socially reproduced workers and social reproducing agents via the classroom. In addition, contemporary theorizing around WAH and SRT critique the heteronormative reproductive imaginary in which the housewife functions (See Capper & Austin, 2018). In conversation with these pieces, this essay seeks to highlight the ways that teaching during the Covid19 pandemic urgently visibilizes a demand to both value and transform unpaid domestic labor.



other peoples' lives depend on us, or the impossibility to see where our work begins and ends, where our work and our desires begin. (Federici, 1975, p. 6)

As a teacher, it is indeed impossible to see where our work begins and ends.

Teaching “in-front” of 27-40 students each hour with perhaps three minutes passing time in between to check in with individual students about missing assignments in one sense begins and ends with first and last bell, perhaps 8:30-3:30, with a lunch duty in between standing in the cafeteria with four other teachers in case multiple adults are needed to break up a fight. Then there is bus duty after last bell, perhaps even committee work or extracurricular activities. So, when do teachers answer emails? When do they stay updated on school policies or collaborate with other teachers to support a student in need? When do they read, grade and respond to the 150 5-paragraph essays that are due every other week? When do they read the books they teach? What about the time needed to find new material to challenge the relevance, rigor and inclusion of our curriculums? When do teachers reflect on their craft to become their best professional self possible for the sake of the students they teach? The answer to these questions is--constantly. The work does not end. We schedule phone calls with the academic counselor for 6 pm while we cook dinner for our families. We grade on Saturday mornings. We read the weekly memo that comes in Sunday evening from the administration to adjust our pedagogical schedules for the week. And the first thing to be cut when we consistently find ourselves out of time is collaboration. Federici's statement therefore outlines the isolation and the unending nature of the work of the teacher articulately.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>See Erica Meiners' “Disengaging from the Legacy of Lady Bountiful in Teacher Education Classrooms” (2002) for a comprehensive conversation on how this unending nature of the teacher is perpetuated via the myth of the (white) Lady Bountiful archetype, and furthermore, how that archetype is reified in North American teacher prep education.

Oftentimes friends outside the teaching profession are surprised to hear that teachers must source their own substitutes. No substitute teacher requests are allowed before or after holidays, and only so many days a year, but even on authorized days when there is no sub available through a sanctioned substitute teacher corporation (because we have a substitute teacher shortage) you are required to come in and teach whether you are sick or grieving. The housewife must prepare the food, for otherwise the children will not eat. The teacher must prepare and deliver the lessons, for otherwise the children will not learn, they in fact will be left alone in a small windowless room all day instead and then the teacher will be fired. This is how Federici's statement outlines how other people's lives depend on teachers' work.

There are, of course, important differences between unpaid labor and underpaid labor, yet the liberation of one may automatically chip away at the liberation of the other, this chipping strengthened through intentional solidarity. Teachers are paid laborers. Yet, they are not paid for all their labor. They are certainly not paid for their role managing the household, so that the adults in a student's life can wage labor at work. The starting salary for teachers in Minneapolis, MN, for example is \$43,000 before taxes, which falls under the low income threshold in Hennepin County. Yet, because teachers are contract workers, we can walk away from the job--not without egregious personal consequences in most cases--but there will be another teacher to underpay in our wake. We must understand this difference as we advocate for the housewife and teacher and the service worker and the domestic laborer all in solidarity. Federici advises that "We want and have to say that we are all housewives, we are all prostitutes and we are all gay.... because as long as we think we are something better, something different than a housewife, we

accept the logic of the master, which is a logic of division....” (Federici, 1975, p. 6). What would the public call to return to the classroom in this pandemic look like if we all took on the needs, ethos and identity of teachers?

Federici calls for a unification of feminized professions, understanding that whether teacher, nurse, secretary or housewife, a struggle for living wages within the social factory is a differentially manifested struggle rooted in a shared experience of sexist oppression. For “[as] is often said,” reminds Federici, “when the needs of the wages labor market require her presence there--‘a woman can do any job without losing her femininity,’ which simply put means that no matter what you do you are still a cunt” (p. 7).

Federici ultimately demands government subsidized wages for housewives, without whom we cannot labor. Throughout her work, she makes both explicit and implicit connections to the work of teachers, which I have highlighted here. She calls on the power of unification of all feminized labor roles in the WAH movement, a unification I demonstrate extends to include teachers today with relative ease.

### **Angela Davis**

While Federici’s call for unification is certainly important for movement building, perhaps equally so is our understanding of the intersectional ways that housework functions, as well as the limitations of the private obligation of housework, which paid or unpaid, may remain an obstacle toward feminist liberation. In her 1985 response to the WAH demand for government subsidized wages for housewives, Angela Davis illustrates that the image of the housewife only reflects “a partial reality” of white middle class

experience, for the housewife “was really a symbol of the economic prosperity enjoyed by the emerging middle class” (Davis, 1985, p. 197).

Davis explains how for women factory workers, the immigrant migrant workers and Black women in domestic labor, we have been required to manage both a wage labor shift, as well as fulfill the unpaid duties of the housewife in a “second shift.” Instituting a wage for housewives, Davis advises, may reify the housewife role of indentured servant when “in the final analysis, neither women nor men should waste precious hours of their lives on work that is neither stimulating, creative, nor productive” (p. 194). Instead, she demands that “Child Care should be socialized, meal preparation should be socialized, housework should be industrialized --and all these services should be readily accessible to working class peoples” because “for Black women today and for all their working-class sisters, the notion that the burden of housework and childcare can be shifted from their shoulders to the society contains one of the radical secrets of women’s liberation” (p. 199). Today, 81% of America’s teachers are white and 75% are women (NCES 2020). Keeping in mind Davis’ critique of the WAH focus on the housewife and the way that the housewife is a symbol of white, middle class America, how can we then make sense of the teaching profession as an extension of white middle class housewife expectations? How can we employ Davis’ critique to question the in-home training and pressure to become a housewife as often the central motivation for young white middle class women to attend teacher training programs, the majority of which last less than 5 years in the profession after graduation (DOE-IES, 2020)?

Another important tenet from Davis’s response and historical analysis of housework shows us that what counts as housework has changed over time and will

continue to change. Davis' historical tracing demonstrates how the housewife is a product of industrialization to buttress capital accumulation, and how that role can continue to change and become obsolete. Quoting Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Davis highlights that "By the end of the century, hardly anyone made their own starch or boiled their laundry in a kettle. In the cities, women bought their bread and at least their underwear ready-made, sent their children to school and probably some clothes out to be laundered, and were debating the merits of canned foods...the flow of industry had passed on and had left idle the loo in the attic and the soup kettle in the shed" (Davis, 1985, p. 197). When we understand how housework has shifted over time, we have the power to shape those continual changes in anti-oppressive ways.

Davis challenges us to continue to alter our orientations to care labor as feminized labor through her critique of the WAH movement. Yes--this is in addition to ending wage theft and we must begin the work of respecting teachers by paying them for their labor. This is plain and simple. But it is only a plain and simple start; the work is not done there. We must work to dismantle our understanding of teachers and housewives as naturalized caring subjects. Davis contends:

Already, more men have begun to assist their partners around the house, some of them even devoting equal time to household chores. But how many of these men have liberated themselves from the assumption that housework is "women's work?" How many of them would not characterize their house-cleaning activities as "helping" their women partners? (p. 193)

In parallel, this means letting go of the need to monetarily contribute to *Donor's Choice* to fund a classroom project or give teachers free burritos once a year. We don't

need the posturing gestures of help. We need solidarity and change. This looks like doing the real work of compensating teachers for their labor, clearly delineating work and non-work hours, and specifically *not* asking teachers to return to inside the classroom while we are in the middle of a pandemic as the ultimate declaration of love and self-sacrifice. This looks like paying teachers, paying the parents of children adequate relief money and respecting the life and livelihood of teachers as trained professionals who joyfully contribute to education, not as naturalized caring subjects available to live and die for the forward motion of capitalist gain. Federici's argument is employed here to demand we pay teachers fairly for their unpaid labors of care. Davis' argument is employed here to challenge us to transform the conditions of the teaching practice. How can these demands inform the way we choose to move forward in the next (vaccinated) stage of the Covid19 pandemic? How can they influence the attitudes we have about getting back to both work and the classroom?

### **The Connection of Expropriation to Exploited Teacher Labor**

In *Is Capitalism Necessarily Racist?* Nancy Fraser (2019) outlines how American capitalism is structurally dependent on America's coloniality and racism. Fraser's analysis allows us to implicate the exploited teacher in the functions of capitalism, which Fraser maintains has a structural basis for racism through expropriation. This implication opens up the possibility of teacher refusal to participate in expropriation. Fraser enumerates on the systemic relation between exploitation and expropriation:

Dispensing with the contractual relation through which capital purchases "labor power" in exchange for wages, expropriation works by confiscating capacities and resources and conscripting them into the circuits of capital

expansion. The confiscation may be blatant and violent, as in New World slavery--or it may be a cloak of commerce, as in the predatory loans and debt foreclosures of the present era. The expropriated subjects may be rural or indigenous communities in the capitalist periphery--or members of subject or subordinated groups in the capitalist core. Once expropriated, they may end up as exploited proletarians, if they're lucky--or, if not, as paupers, slum-dwellers, sharecroppers, “natives,” or slaves, subjects of ongoing expropriation outside the wage nexus. (p. 4)

Fraser reminds us that the American exploited worker manufactures stolen “capacities and resources.” Exploited wage laborers labor over, on and with dispossessed goods, lands and bodies. If the exercise of capitalism did not steal land and bodies to begin with (and continually), the exploited worker would have no land on which to build a factory, no materials to manufacture and sell, as well as no wealth built off of the kidnapping and enslavement of Black people in America to then invest in enterprise. This is how, Fraser argues, capitalism is necessarily racist.<sup>20</sup> It is also how the exploited worker--and for our purposes, the teacher--plays a role in continued expropriation of Black, brown and indigenous peoples.

For our specific consideration on the role of the teacher and the demand to humanize the teaching profession through compensation and transformation, we can employ Fraser’s argument thusly: Fraser implores us to disengage from the cycle of expropriation to exploitation in schools. This means we are concerned with the working

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<sup>20</sup> Ruth Wilson Gilmore begins with the premise that “Capitalism requires inequality. Racism enshrines it” to discuss capitalism as a “technology of antirelationality” in her book *Golden Gulag* (2007). The connections Gilmore makes between American surplus and incarceration bear on the role of the classroom in the school to prison pipeline, as well as the formation of the worker that Fraser references.

conditions of teachers, as these teaching conditions are the learning conditions of the students, as well as self-evidently important. Yet, our demands to transform the conditions of teaching cannot stop at how well capitalism compensates teachers, but rather how we teachers can refuse to participate in expropriation in the classroom and curriculum.

The aftermath of expropriation, as Fraser summarizes, includes an option for expropriated peoples to choose between wage laborer and lumpenproletariat. From my experience teaching in public schools within major metropolitan city limits for the past ten years, these two options are precisely what are named as motivation for learning. You learn math because you will need it for college. You need to be able to read, so that you can get a job. In this way, the teacher not only babysits the child so that the parents can wage labor in the factory, but also rears the child into place within the social factory as either exploited worker or expropriated peoples.

### **The Classroom & The Housewife**

Teachers have been teaching for the duration of the pandemic. Yet, we demand teachers return to the inside of the classroom. What are we asking for here? Or rather, what does this ask point to about the work of teachers? Teaching, which is what we *have* been doing, is what teachers are compensated for under contract. However, when we demand or bribe teachers to return to teaching inside of the classroom, when we as administrators call teachers personally at home on the weekends and wax to them about how the students are falling behind without them there in front of a white board, we very clearly outline the role of teacher as caregiver, homemaker, cleaner, and child rearer within the social factory. Using Dalla Costa and James' definition of the role of the



housewife, when we tell the teacher to get back inside the classroom, we reveal her role as housewife. We tell the housewife to get back inside the kitchen where she belongs...no longer a person separate from the tasks she takes up to contribute to society.

### **Conclusion**

I argue here that understanding the teacher as a housewife is key to making choices that humanize and liberate as we eventually find our way to the classroom in a newly vaccinated world. We understand how Covid19 has revealed the ways that teachers function as housewives, used to occupy children and turn them into future workers, so that the childrens' guardians can get back to work and accumulate wealth for their bosses. Grumet's documentation of the sexist foundations of the early American public schools teacher in helps us connect the historical job description of teaching to the unpaid care labor of teachers today. Federici and Davis' arguments present demands to struggle against the exploitation of the housewife within capitalist society. We apply Federici to fairly value and compensate for the labor of the housewife. We apply Davis to transform the private conditions of domestic labor. A context of the cycle of capitalism as necessarily reliant on expropriation is provided to influence the shape of the transformations we demand. These arguments, in tandem with the inseparability of the teacher to the struggles of the housewife, offer us salient implications for how to move forward with the newly vaccinated stage of the covid19 pandemic.

We must compensate teachers for their unending care labor and we must transform the conditions of teaching beyond an emblem of self-sacrifice. We must liberate not only the teacher from exploitation but the classroom from its role in

expropriation. The requisite place to begin?--We must affirm the humanization of teachers as we plan to reopen our classrooms.

### Chapter Three

#### *Demonstrating Change: Four modes of transformation that we demand in the art of resistance*

Oftentimes when we discuss building a better world, we use abstract language to illustrate our goals--perhaps we mention a “brighter future,” or schools where “all children have equal opportunity to learn.” The presidential campaign for the Obama administration was centered simply on, “change.” Abstract notions of betterment are easier to agree upon and they certainly fit nicely on lawn signs, yet there are myriad reasons why it behooves us to spend time elucidating what change looks like and what kinds of change we are talking about. When the public has shared language about different kinds of change, we can fine-tune our demands to the powers that be, as well as calibrate our own practices of personal resistances and community labor. There is more than one way to resist oppression; and likewise, there is more than one way that the changes which we demand occur.

In Tamara Fakhoury’s *Eight Dimensions of Resistance* (2019), Fakhoury outlines a taxonomy of resistance. Categorizing the *subject* doing the resistance (individual or collective), the *target* of resistance (private or public), the *scope* of resistance (local or global) and the *tone* of resistance (loud or quiet), Fakhoury delineates qualities of example acts of resistance (ranging from a woman who decides to stop obsessively removing body hair to mass protests led by Dr. Rev. MLK Jr). With this grand articulation, Fakhoury engenders philosophical discussion on specific kinds of rich and often-ignored resistance, such as personal, *quiet resistance*, as well as *violent resistance*.

Following suit to the broad uses of taxonomic work in Fakhoury's *Dimensions*, this chapter aims to situate a philosophical model of transformation by articulating four modes of change. These four modes are: *Attitudes*, *Embodiment*, *Organizational/Political*, and, *Epistemological/Imaginariness*. Or in other words, now that we have a sense of the many ways that we resist, this chapter takes up the other side of resistance--the demonstrated change that we see due to our resistances. In fact, I see resistances and change as co-constitutive in nature. We resist toward change, change is owed to resistances, the kinds of changes we seek informs our modes of resistance, the dimensions of our resistances create the shape of the change that comes. Without one, the other does not exist.

An agenda for this chapter is as follows: First, I will unpack the shortcomings of a discussion of change that relies heavily on changing one's mind. Then I will work my way systematically through the four modes of change (attitudes, embodiment, organizational/political and epistemological/imaginaries), providing theoretical references and an example for each mode. Finally, I will discuss the limitations and implications of this philosophical model of transformation. While the scope of this chapter does not include any discussion on the nature of oppression, oppression--specifically the dismantling of systemic oppression-- is the motivating force behind the formulation of the four modes of change which this chapter articulates.

### **What Does it Mean to Change? Exploring the Shortcomings of Mental Attitudes.**

Here we are in the last chapter and I am asking you to journal again, just like this were the first. Ignore the sysphisian nature of the request. Grab your favorite writing materials, like some heavy-weighted watercolor paper and a black Stabilo pen. Or a

computer. Tablet. Etc. For three minutes of ongoing writing, I ask you to write about the prompt below. Included in the prompt is both the language of the prompt itself and an example to clarify the task:

*Prompt: Tell me about a time you changed your mind about something you previously believed to be true. Describe the circumstances. What was that moment like in your body, what sensations came up, what ideas? How does this impact you today?*

*Example: When I was four years old, my eldest of two brothers told me that we humans lived on the outside of the Earth--not, as I had previously believed, on the inside. My brother was a prankster by nature and I was so certain he was pulling my leg. After all, if we lived on the outside of the earth, we would simply fall off, wouldn't we? I ran to my middle brother for support from my eldest brother's gruesome games and to my chagrin, my middle brother confirmed we do in fact live on the outside of the earth. My stomach immediately dropped and churned. I felt sick with uncertainty. If I was wrong about this--what else could I be misinformed about? Were my parents my parents? Was I really four years old? Did my Great Pyreneese dog even love me after all?*

This is all you now. 3 minutes. Writing.

We have some common language regarding changing one's mind. In the childhood memory I relaid above, the story centers on how I changed my mind about a proposition (that humans live inside the Earth's crust). The story also implies the ways that my body was impacted by this crisis of knowing (with sensations of vertigo), as well as my foundational relations as a four-year old (my parents and dog). When looking at your own journal response about changing your mind about something you previously believed to be true, what different kinds of changes were provoked by your experience? In many cases changing one's mind is mostly sufficient. In the case of my knowing as a 4-year old that we live on the outside of the Earth, my behavior did not need to shift greatly to show belief in that fact, nor were any policy changes needed. However, in most cases of changing systemic oppression, a change in mental attitudes is not sufficient for any kind of satisfyingly demonstrative transformation.

We also know that in many cases where one changes one's mind about something, that kind of shift in a mental attitude isn't sufficient for a change in individual behavior, nor laws, nor our imaginations of what is possible. For example, when we protest as a part of the Black Lives Matter movement, it is not a sufficient result for everyone (including cops) to mentally and verbally affirm that a) Black Lives Matter, and, b) racism is prevalent and reprehensible, and then yet for police to continue shooting unarmed Black men. We can agree that a shift in mental states without a shift in behavior to accompany it would not be enough in the movement to resist the pervasive systemic and institutionalized racism of police brutality.

So what then are we looking for? Asking for? What does change mean? Are changes in mental attitudes unimportant? Is there a hierarchy of these kinds of change?

What kinds of change are more easily achieved? What kinds are left out of public dialogue? Or academic dialogue? And perhaps most important, practically speaking, when we know we aim for “classrooms where all children can learn...” what kinds of changes ought we work on for this description to become a vivid reality?

Thus, I propose elucidating Four Modes of Change as a philosophical model of transformation. I argue that getting smarter about a taxonomy of change allows us to fine-tune our resistances and illuminate the visions of our futures free from systemic oppression. The four modes of change are as follows:

1. First Mode: Attitudes
2. Second Mode: Embodiment
3. Third Mode: Organizational/Political
4. Fourth Mode: Epistemological/Imaginary

Now that we have briefly discussed the shortcomings of conversations on change relying heavily on the first mode change that is ultimately insufficient in and of itself for dismantling systemic oppression, the following section aims to define each of the four modes of change.

### **Four Modes of Change**

#### **First Mode: Attitudes** (Changing Our Minds)

To change your attitude about something needs perhaps the least amount of philosophical references to understand. In fact, it may be easiest to communicate what I mean when I write about a change in attitudes through accounts of folk conversation on changing one’s mind. When my mother recounts to me, “Ava Duvernay’s film, *13th*,

changed my mind about prison labor...our prison system is deplorable!,” we are talking about first mode change. When my colleague adds to a post-work conversation on politics that he has “changed his mind about Elizabeth Warren after watching the first presidential primary debates,” we are talking about first mode change. When an international graduate student studying at a major public research university built on stolen indigenous land announces in class that she “had only positive feelings about campus until reading an informative text on land-back reparations to Native peoples and now [she] feels conflicted,” we are talking about first mode change.

First Mode Change: *Attitudes* is the changing of our minds. In the first example, my mother changed the way she thinks about the US system of prison labor, or more specifically about the proposition that prison labor in the United States is permissible. She no longer believes it is permissible and in this way, her attitude toward prison labor changed quite discretely from a “yes” to a “no.” In the second example, my co-worker utters that he has changed his mind about a person, although he is not specific in this utterance about what kinds of changes have occurred to shift his attitude about Elizabeth Warren. I appreciate the vagueness here, as it captures a practical nuance of colloquial discussions on change. Even though we are not quite sure what changed, perhaps my coworker now found Elizabeth Warren prepared, trustworthy, practical, intelligent, and reflective after watching the first debate. In context, he was expressing his newly positive attitude toward her person. In this case, the coworker changed his attitude toward Elizabeth Warren from perhaps “doubtful” to “confident” or “unconvinced” to “convinced.” The third example shows a case where a fellow graduate student self-ascribes as having an absence of ideas about United States land-back reparations to



Native peoples, and in particular the university's role in that history, and then communicates how that absence is filled with new ideas after reading professor and Dakota scholar Waziyatowin's (2008) text *What Does Justice Look Like?* In this example, the graduate student's mind changed from having zero perspective to having many perspectives on a topic. In all cases, we are discussing the changing of one's mind.

This is the kind of change we discuss commonly and routinely among friends, family, neighbors and colleagues. Of course, when we discuss changing our minds about something, we often (hopefully!) also change our behaviors, as well as advocate for organizational changes to match those shifts in attitudes. Yet, it seems important to isolate, even impractically here, the phenomenon of changing one's mind as the first mode.

Why not just use the term "mind" here, since this is often how we talk about these first mode kinds of changes, anyway? Why use the term "attitudes"? Admittedly, there are many ways to phrase this particular kind of change. Mind, beliefs, speech acts, avowals, utterances, dispositions, self-ascriptive dispositions, mental states, cognitive judgements, paradigms, propositional attitudes, self-ascriptive propositional attitudes, and, attitudes are all helpful language. I think as long as we can get on the same page about the kind of change we are discussing here, none of these terms are too far off. Mind is generally far too broad, encompassing all the other possible terms. Mental States are many and a bit too fleeting for the examples provided above. Perhaps my mother had a whole range of mental states in her general changing of her attitude towards prison labor. Avowals is a bit too strong for the example of the international graduate student learning about US Indian Affairs Policy and treaty breaking for the first time in her life. Anything

with a proposition (propositional disposition, belief or attitude) precludes the changes in mind toward a person, such as my coworker and Elizabeth Warren. In the very first example of when I changed my own mind about whether humans live on the outside or inside of the Earth, I never uttered that we humans lived on the inside of the Earth--there was no speech act. I had simply come to believe this over time as a child without even saying it out loud. And I imagine for many cases we want to consider regarding systemic oppression, there are plenty of folks who hold beliefs out there which are homophobic, racist, sexist, ableist, transphobic or islamophobic without ever having said those beliefs out loud to others or even themselves. Finally, I agree with the work of Eric Schwitzgebel (2010) critiquing our use of the term belief as a description of a mental disposition without congruent behavior. In *Acting Contrary to our Professed Beliefs or the Gulf Between Occurrent Judgment and Dispositional Belief*, he asks--if a person disavows racism, yet her actions at work in hiring, promoting and consorting demonstrate that she generally associates whiteness with superiority of intelligence--does she *really* believe racism is wrong? The first mode: Attitudes is to change the ways we think and talk about something. Using another example from Schwitzgebel: when listening to a debate, which side someone would agree with, whether their behavior follows suit or not, is changing one's attitudes.

When we resist oppression, we often demand to change attitudes. For example, the #believewomen campaign was an online hashtag movement with decentralized political goals that gained momentum during Dr. Christine Blasey Ford's testimony of surviving sexual assault perpetrated by Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh at the senate confirmation hearing for Kavanaugh. This movement was one branch of the larger

#MeToo movement founded by Tarana Burke and following the precedent silence-breaking testimony of Anita Hill in the supreme court judiciary committee hearing of 1991. The #believewomen hashtag campaign, like many hashtag campaigns, aims for a first mode change in attitudes as one of its primary goals--aims to change the way we trust women and the testimonies given by women about their own experiences. Clear in the language of the hashtag, the movement demands we believe women, trust women and value women's testimonies. Granted, when we fully trust and believe the testimonies of women, surely our behaviors toward women, as well as our organizational and political structures would change. Yet, the #believewomen movement starts with a changing of our minds.

In *Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness* by Sandra Bartkey, Bartkey (1975) enumerates on the concurrent development of both mental attitudes and embodied behaviors that is feminist consciousness-raising. Bartkey describes this concurrent process, detailing the behavioral shifts of what she regards as an integral part of consciousness:

To be a feminist, one has first to become one....In the course of undergoing the transformation to which I refer, the feminist changes her behavior: She makes new friends; she responds differently to people and events; her habits of consumption change; sometimes she alters her living arrangements or, more dramatically, her whole style of life. She may decide to pursue a career, to develop potentialities within herself which had long lain dormant or she may commit herself to political struggle. (p. 11)

Bartkey describes the difference here between thinking/believing “women are trustworthy” versus demonstrating developed trusting and intimate relations among people who are women. To Bartkey, feminist consciousness necessitates both the ideological shift and the behavioral shift.

In fact, I argue the power of evaluating first mode change in attitudes and second mode change in embodiment in tandem with one another provides generative comparative material to help us better resist oppression toward transformation. When we have language to describe the first mode change of attitudes in context (e.g: person x often encourages others to believe the testimony of women), as well as to describe the second mode change of embodiment in context (e.g: person x often raises their voice to interrupt and speak over the testimonies of women), we can better appraise the kinds of change we still need to work on for congruence between first mode and second mode changes. In this example, perhaps intellectual persuasion about why it is necessary to believe women won’t do much to combat the embodied practice of person x raising their voice over women speaking. Perhaps instead, an intentionally embodied strategy would yield more effective results in changing that particular sexist behavior.

In the following subsection, *Second Mode: Embodiment*, we will further discuss the second mode of change: embodiment, which encompasses behavior, sensation, affect and physiological automation.

### **Second Mode: Embodiment** (Changing Our Bodies & Behaviors)

“I can't believe what you say, because I see what you do.” - James Baldwin

Second Mode Change: *Embodiment* is often discussed as “walking the walk.” It is how our actions, habits and bodies demonstrate a belief because saying “I’m not racist” is different than acting in anti-racist ways. Relying on the ongoing example of sexism in the previous sub-section, if person x does indeed stop interrupting and talking over women, then person x has successfully changed a particular sexist behavior. Behavioral change is a substantial part of second mode change, although I would like us to consider the embodied changes of sensation and physiological automation, as well.

Tyson Lewis (2018) recalls a close friend who says things like ‘I don’t have a single racist belief. I think everyone is equal’ and yet Lewis notices that his friend “would not sit next to Black passengers on the transit line, or would avoid a Black man walking alone at night”; when we discuss the racist behaviors of his friend, we are talking about second mode change (p. 1-2). When George Yancy (2005) illustrates the invisibility of whiteness, the warping of the sensory experience of seeing, and particularly white folks *not-seeing* whiteness, which centers and de-racializes whiteness into a dominant identity, we are talking about second mode change. Consider a new parent with a baby in a carrier, pacing around a metro station between two other families, gently bouncing their child to sleep on their chest. When the parent’s pulse changes, racing more quickly when pacing near a family wearing hijab than when near a white passing family who does not wear hijab, the physiological automation of heart rate and breathing that are the parent’s embodied islamophobia demands second mode change.

Second mode change: Embodiment is seeing/gazing differently, sensing differently, emoting differently, reacting differently, as well as behaviors and habits changing--it is when our bodies are and act in significantly changed ways. In the last

example provided above, the rising pulse of the parent's body is a racist physiological automation that must change through second mode transformation. In George Yancy's example of a white woman in an elevator seeing him as a criminal, not noticing nor seeing whiteness, the sensory experience in question here must transform through second mode change. In Tyson Lewis' example of his "not racist" friend who does not walk past or sit next to Black men in transit, we are considering the need for second mode change of how his friend quite literally moves through the world.

Second mode change: Embodiment looks like a change in both the ways our bodies behave, but also a change in the very constitution and comportment of being. Embodied changes are often connected to a shift in attitudes (such as the process of feminist consciousness raising that Bartkey describes), but that is not always the case. When individual embodied changes occur, it also follows that collective Organizational/Political changes will follow suit, as our politic is comprised of individuals, although we also know this is not always the case. Embodiment can be a change enacted and understood in isolation from other modes of change. Furthermore, it is generative to consider what kinds of embodied changes are needed for sufficient transformation from oppression and toward liberation.

Consider the response from Tyson Lewis to his self-avowed "not-racist" friend who demonstrates racist behaviors. Lewis adds:

One response to these events might be that my friend was lying, and that he indeed held pervasive racist beliefs but avoided discussing them with me out of a desire to prove he was not racist (Dunton and Fazio 1997). Or, if not lying, my friend might have been exhibiting a racial

‘dyconsciousness’ (King 1991, 140) that harbors distorted and inaccurate beliefs about diversity even though he may deny he is a racist....But what if we took my friend’s observations at face value? He did not hold racist propositional content or images in his mind (beliefs) but nevertheless exhibited racist habits and actions...This means that racism exists despite ideological protests against prejudice....It is my contention that racism is much more pervasive than the argument beliefs would grant. From a phenomenological perspective of the first-person, engaged actor, bodily comportments are not necessarily filtered through mental representations or belief systems. Such comportments exhibit a special kind of ‘motor intentionality’ (Merleau Ponty 2012) all their own that is not reducible to mental calculation and evaluation, and as such is pre-conceptual, pre-theoretical, and pre-observational. (p 1-2)

With this analysis, Lewis calls attention to the irreducibility of embodiment. He also names the prevalence of embodied racism despite or alongside “ ideological protests against prejudice.”

When we resist oppression, we often demand to change embodiments. For example, in the Black Lives Matter movement, embodied change could look like a change in automation of a white (often armed police) body in interaction with Black and brown bodies (Yousuf, 2021). Another demand for embodied change is communicated in protest signs that read: *Stop Killing Us*, or, *Stop Killing My Neighbors*. The behavioral demands to change, to actively STOP killing unarmed Black and brown bodies as a part of police harassment on communities of color is

a demand for embodied change. In social justice education initiatives working toward classrooms “where all students can learn,” embodied change looks like many things, including teachers calling on their girl students and their students of color in class (when the present norm is to spend more time answering questions from white students who are boys.)

In the following sub-section, Third Mode: Organizational/Political, we move our discussion of change into the collective sphere to animate the kinds of change we ask for when policies, precedents and organizational protocols transform.

**Third Mode: Organizational/Political** (Changing our Structures and Regulations)

Third mode change: *Organizational/Political* is the changing of our infrastructure, whether that be policy, precedent or the formal organization of power. I live in Minneapolis, MN, where after multiple high-profile cases of fatal police shootings of unarmed Black men, the demand for organizational/political change has grown tremendously in the past year. For example, Derek Chauvin was convicted guilty of 2nd degree murder and manslaughter for the killing of George Floyd and when we talk about the shift in precedent to convict a police officer of murder (when police killings rarely lead to charges, let alone convictions), we are talking about third mode change. When as a city of Minneapolis, our city council leaders committed to dismantling our police department to build a new community safety model that does not threaten the lives of our communities of color, the re-organization of power here is third mode change. When over 20,000 residents signed a petition to add a referendum to the fall ballot that would give residents the option to vote on changing the city charter, so that it no longer includes a certain number of police officers as written into the formation of our city, we are talking



about third mode change. When our government officials end qualified immunity and ban police use of choke holds, those insufficient reforms (that are still useful, just insufficient) are the kind of policy shifts we talk about in third mode change.

Third mode change: Organizational/Political is the changing of the structures and regulations of our collective. In Fakhoury's *Dimensions* (2019), as previously cited above, Fakhoury delineates kinds of resistance between the *target* of resistance (private or public) as well as the *subject* doing the resistance (individual or collective). Organizational/Political change is a result of public, and often (although not exclusively) collective resistance. Third mode change could be the ending of the vietnam war due to mass protests, or policy shifts in Alabama during the mid century Civil Rights movement after the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955-1956. Fakhoury explicates the definitions of collective and public resistance:

While oppression is a large-scale system of injustice that harms entire social groups, persons experience its effects as individuals. People can resist either alone or with others through collective action...A woman who insists on keeping her name when she gets married or decides to stop obsessively removing her body hair is engaged in a kind of *individual resistance*. While she could have the support of her friends, her resistance is individual in the sense that she acts on her own and not as a member of a collective of resisters. A man who joins the Black Panthers and patrols the streets in black neighborhoods to protect residents from police brutality is engaged in a kind of *collective resistance*. He doesn't do it as an individual, but together with others as a member of the Black Panthers.

Unlike resistance performed as an individual, which one undertakes independently from others, collective acts of resistance are collaborative; they depend on strategic joint action to achieve their goal.... The next pair of categories I wish to introduce is distinguished according to the target of the act of resistance. Activists like MLK and Malcolm X not only acted collectively with others to oppose racism and segregation in America (i.e: they resisted collectively), but they also sought to change specific laws in the country's administration. As such, they and others like them were engaged in *publicly targeted* acts of resistance. By "Public" I mean to single out a particular kind of target that these acts of resistance aim to push back against. The target of public resistance is to change or oppose oppressive aspects of public administration. Public resistance focuses on issues that can be addressed by changing the law and its enforcement. (p 72-73)

In resisting oppression, we often demand to make Organizational/Political changes. For example, in the year 2020 (alongside a global pandemic and an uprising against policing and police brutality) the United States government passed an all time high number of bills that limit or target trans youth. When we use social media campaigns to call state representatives to eradicate "bathroom bill" laws that exclude trans people from the right to exist in public places, we successfully used collective, public resistance toward Third Mode Change. Organizational/Political changes are often part of large national movements such as the protests against the Vietnam war. Or the current policy platform for the Movement 4 Black Life (M4BL) found here: <https://m4bl.org/policy-platforms/>.

Now granted, all of the examples I have used to articulate third mode change are the changes of laws, policies, precedents that are oppressive and through resistance...become less oppressive. I have not provided any examples of Organizational/Political changes which do not simply respond to oppression, but instead change the shape of our politic toward something transformative or positive in-an-of-itself. Since there are so many oppressive policies and precedents in existence, it is easy to limit the creation of laws to a genre of reactive legislation. However, in the next subsection, Fourth Mode Change: Epistemological/Imaginariness, we will discuss the kinds of change that transforms what we view as possible, how we come to know, and how we love, relate, dream and imagine.

**Fourth Mode: Epistemological/Imaginariness** (When We Come to Know Differently, Dream Differently, Love Differently)

Fourth Mode Change: Epistemological/Imaginariness is largely the changing of our imagination, as we come to know what is and what is possible. In the chapter *On National Culture* in Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon describes three stages of the colonized intellectual. The first stage is one of assimilation--the colonized intellectual wills to become the colonizer. The second stage is resistance--the colonized intellectual creates to resist the colonizer. This is a needed stage, as resisting oppression is often the most important work we can do. Yet, this stage of resistance means that the colonizer still functions as the center of the minds and hearts of the colonized, even if that center is one of opposition and resistance. Fanon describes the third stage of the colonized intellectual as "struggle which aims at a fundamentally different set of relations between men" (p. 246). Fanon elaborates below:

The colonized man who writes for his people ought to use the past with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and a basis for hope...the contact of the people with the new movement gives rise to a new rhythm of life and to forgotten muscular tensions, and develops the imagination. Everytime the storyteller relates a fresh episode to his public, he presides over a real invocation. The existence of a new type of man is revealed to the public. The present is no longer turned in upon itself but spread out for all to see. The storyteller once more gives free rein to his imagination; he makes innovation and he creates a work of art. It even happens that the characters, which are barely ready for transformation--highway robbers or more or less antisocial vagabonds--are taken up and remodeled. The emergence of the imagination and of the creative urge in the songs and epic stories of a colonized country is worth following. The storyteller replies to the expectant people by successive approximations, and makes his way, apparently alone but in fact helped on by his public, toward the seeking out of new patterns, that is to say national patterns...The struggle for freedom does not give back to the national culture its former value and shapes: this struggle which aims at a fundamentally different set of relations between men cannot leave intact either the form or the content of the people's culture. After the conflict there is not only the disappearance of colonialism but also the disappearance of the colonized man. (p. 241)

This new relationality is where Fanon relays that freedom lies, when the hearts and minds of the colonized no longer rotate around and respond to the colonizer, but function within a completely different and self-intrinsic structure, and through that--the colonized cease to exist.

One reason it can be difficult to discuss change of our epistemes and imagination is because Fourth Mode Change constructs post-colonial ways to conceptualize, yet this theorization takes place through an English-speaking academia. You see the paradox in the attempt to describe new ways of knowing from within a system often dominated by colonial ways of knowing and legitimization? Yet to help further elucidate Fourth Mode Change: Epistemological/Imaginations, I find it useful to call upon a poem by Franny Choi, titled *Field Trip to the Museum of Human History*. I was introduced to this poem by the scholar E Orenlas at a 2020 panel discussion on abolition hosted by the University of Minnesota Queer Student Association. In the panel discussion, Orenlas employed the poem to demonstrate the work of speculative fiction as a tool for futuring, or in other words, as a way to imagine a world freer than the one we know now. In a similar way, Choi's poem helps us understand Fourth Mode Change as we shift our imagination of what is possible:

**Field Trip to the Museum of Human History**

**By Franny Choi**

Everyone had been talking about the new exhibit  
recently unearthed artifacts from a time

no living hands remember. What twelve year old  
doesn't love a good scary story? Doesn't thrill

at rumors of her own darkness whispering  
from the canyon? We shuffled the dim light

And gaped at the secrets buried  
in clay, reborn as warning signs:

a "nightstick," so called for its use  
in extinguishing the lights in one's eyes.

A machine used for scanning fingerprints  
like cattle ears, grain shipments. We shuddered,

shoved our fingers in our pockets, acted tough.

Pretended not to listen as the guide said,

*Ancient American society was built on competition  
and maintained through domination and control.*

*In place of modern-day accountability practices,*

*the institution known as the “police” kept order*

*using intimidation, punishment and force.*

We pressed our noses to the glass,

strained to imagine strangers running into our home,  
pointing guns in our faces because we’d hoarded

too much of the wrong kind of property.

Jadeira asked something about redistribution

and the guide spoke of safes, evidence rooms,  
more profit. Marian asked about raiding the rich,

and the guide said, *In America, there were no greater  
protections from police than wealth and whiteness.*

Finally, Zaki asked what we were all wondering:

*But what if you didn’t want to?*

And the walls snickered and said, *steel,  
padlock, stripsearch, hardstop.*

Dry-mouthed, we came upon a contraption  
of chain and bolt, an ancient torture instrument

The guide called “handcuffs.” We stared  
at the diagrams and almost felt the cold metal

licking our wrists, almost tasted dirt,  
almost heard the siren and slammed door,

the cold-blooded click of the cocked-back pistol,  
and our palms were slick with some old recognition,

as if in some forgotten dream we did live this way,  
in submission, in fear, assuming positions

of power were earned, or at least carved in steel,  
that they couldn’t be torn down like musty curtains

an old house cleared of its dust and obsolete artifacts.

We threw open the doors to the museum,

shedding its nightmares on the marble steps,  
and bounded into the sun, toward the school buses



or toward home, or the forests, or the fields,  
or wherever our good legs could roam.

Choi's poem exemplifies the connection between the second and third stage of the colonized intellectual that Fanon illuminates. While this piece still functions as an act of resistance that names colonial discipline nets in its storytelling, it also functions as a speculative tool for futuring by visualizing a world where the youth can hardly even imagine what a world filled with policing looks like. *Field Trip to the Museum of Human History* stabilizes a police-free future, writes it, imagines it into existence--a place where we come to know differently (about right and wrong, not through punishment, but community accountability.) This coming to know differently is the fourth mode change.

#### **Four Modes in Summary**

In summary, the four modes of change are first mode: attitudes; second mode: embodiment; third mode: organizational/political; and, fourth mode: epistemological/imaginaries. Together, these four modes begin an articulation of a philosophical model of transformation. In the following sections, *Considerations & Limitations*, as well as, *Implications*, I will discuss some limitations of this model, as well as implications that I contend are useful in our thinking through and enacting resistances toward transformation from oppression.

#### **Considerations & Limitations**

Now that we have established the four modes of change, let's get on with some limitations of this philosophical model of transformation, as well as some considerations for its conceptualization and use. First, the four modes of change do not necessarily

develop from left to right and it would be detrimental to suggest so. For example, starting with the fourth mode change: imaginary, such as in speculative fiction work by Octavia Butler, impacts change in the other three modes of transformation. Second, there are plenty of occasions in which transformation occurs in co-constitutive ways between the 4 modes. It is hyperbolic simplification to imply that the four modes work independently of one another. While possible, I concede that in the majority of real world empirical considerations, we see all four modes at work in social movements for transformation from oppression. Third, LA Paul reminds us that personally transformative experiences are unknowable in certain ways (2014). That is to say, Paul contends that for something to be truly transformative, that means that we will be a different version of ourselves after a given transformative experience. Due to this, we often can't have an illustrative idea about what we might look like after those changes. Thus, as we discuss all four modes of change and what "counts" as second mode or fourth mode change, we are loosely theorizing here. Paul reminds us that as changed individuals, we may have a differing account of what fourth mode change looks like. Lastly, there may very well be more than four modes of change. I am enthusiastic about future discussion on additional modes, but start with these four due to excited implications covered in the next section.

### **Implications**

Change, Smange--why break holistic changes into types with labels, anyway? How does it serve us to name and notice four modes of change? There are three key implications I wish to flesh out here.

First, articulating the four modes of change serves us to notice which modes of transformation we favor (perhaps 1 and 3) and cultivate resistances that attend to modes

less popular (such as 2 and 4.) In movement building, we often march to change legislation or to show dissent for political choice making. However, we can also protest to protect the ways we come to know, such as demanding funding for dual language immersion schools.

Second, articulating the four modes of change serves for work toward personal and collective transformations by identifying where these modes are incongruent. For example, do school teachers know how to say all the right things about gender equity in teacher education programming and then in practice, call on a consistent majority of the raised hands from white, boys in their classes? Then this notable incongruence between Attitudes and Embodiment tells us that we may need to shift the organized curricular priorities of our teacher education programming so that we begin to dream differently about the possibilities of learning.

Third, articulating the four modes of change serves us philosophically to get smarter about each mode. I have particular interest in working with the fourth mode. How can and ought we engage in demanding change in our epistemologies/imaginaries? What does that look like in application?

### **Conclusion**

In short, protest is a demonstration of hope--a demand that optimistically assumes our world is capable of change. Yet, what does it mean to change? What kinds of change are we advocating for when we resist in multitudinous ways? In this chapter, I outline four different modes of change as a philosophical model of transformation: Attitudes; Embodiment; Organizational/Political; and Epistemological/Imaginaries. Building on literature in philosophies of resistance, I argue that articulating modes of transformation

has salient implications for how we choose to demonstrate and think through resistances to oppression. With this philosophical model of change, we aim for “classrooms where all children can learn...” and the nuance and precision to enact changes to work toward this description becoming a vivid reality.

## **Conclusion to the Project**

In these chapters, I aim to discuss three concerns in the larger discussion on gender and education. Chapter one is written for teacher-candidates about the experience of LGBTQIA2+ students in schools, invoking a pragmatic discussion on how teachers ought to talk, act and organize on students' behalf. Chapter two focuses on the exploitation of teacher labor derived from sexist foundations of the teaching practice. In this analysis, I urge the reader to demand humanizing changes to the teaching profession, especially now during the Covid19 pandemic, so that we can break the cycle of expropriation to exploitation in schools. Inspired by the call to change that chapters one and two implore, chapter three pivots to consider different kinds of change. In chapter three, I build a philosophical model for four different modes of change. I contend that articulating these four modes may help in getting smarter about our resistances both in and out of the classroom.

### **Limitations**

One limitation in the work of these three chapters is in the scope of this text as compared with the phenomenon of gender writ large. Post-Intentional Phenomenological research aims to craft texts that capture partial and multiple realities of how a phenomenon works/what it does, not necessarily what a phenomenon is. This is an intentional practice of letting go of the quest for essential structures that guides early phenomenology. Yet, whether partiality is my goal or not, I still find it a limitation at times. There is so much more to say when it comes to gender that is outside of the scope of this text. This text therefore cannot function as a treatise on how gender works, nor even how gender is at work in the classroom. It is a very small part of the conversation. If

one was looking for comprehensive understanding of gender at work in schools, this text simply wouldn't cut it. It must be read in tandem with many other texts that speak to varied manifestations and provocations of gender.

Another limitation in the work of these three chapters is the way that the experience of students and the experience of teachers are illustrated to be so cleanly separated. In chapter one I claim that teacher habits directly impact the survey results and sense of belonging for queer youth. In chapter two, I argue that teacher working conditions are student learning conditions. I use this premise to add to the urgency to humanize the teaching practice. Both of these claims imply that while the teacher experience certainly impacts the student experience, ultimately, those are separate experiences. However, during the data collection period for this research project, I was reminded again and again from my cohort of research participants that the experiences of teachers and the experiences of students can not be so neatly separated. They may in fact be just one interdependent experience. Or two sides of the same coin. Here are two excerpts from our group interview process that I hope demonstrate what I mean when I mention the interdependence of the experience of teacher and student:

“When I was deterred from coming out at school, it not only hurt me, but it robbed my students of support and connection I could have provided for them. When they were bullied, I couldn't share my experience being bullied because that was wrapped up with my sexual orientation. I couldn't share my experience with depression, with losing a parent at a young age--these are all experiences my students' share and they were

robbed of the opportunity to connect with a teacher because I couldn't bring my whole self into the classroom.” (participant A)

and,

“We were doing a unit on the civil rights movement of the 60s and 70s. And as part of that unit, we told students they could choose any of those five or six different intersecting rights movements and one of those being the LGBT movement. (A student group) picked one leader from the LGBT movement to research, which got back to the parents, which got back to the administration and then got back to us. Even though students chose--like we did not move anybody in groups, we wanted all groups to be represented, but we did not move anybody--it got back to us. [The admin] said ‘you know you should probably send a letter home. Make sure parents know what's being taught at school with an opt out option.’ It was the only time I ever stormed out of a building.” (Participant B)

These excerpts from the group interview transcription show the interdependence of the student and teacher experience. Participant A expresses regret that they could not fully support the struggles of their student because many of their life experiences are tied up in/experienced through their gender and sexual orientation, which they were pressured away from living publicly with at their place of work. Participant B shares experience of discrimination by administration in curriculum formation that we understand impacts what students are allowed and furthermore encouraged, to learn of their own histories. Both moments described were illustrations of gender at work in schooling. Both student and teacher experience are tied up in one single moment. The way I drafted one chapter

about student experience and another chapter about teacher experience does not accurately capture the overlapping and all-encompassing nature of the phenomenon of gender. In gender and education, the affirmation of gender expression and all sexual orientations for students, teachers, families, administrators and community members positively impacts all other contributors to the community. So, discretely separating the experience of teacher and student is one limitation of many from the work presented in these chapters--but one limitation in particular that is of interest for future research.

### **Implications for Future Research**

This overlapping and interdependent nature of gender is one concern for future research. This may look like taking the same interview data and producing one text that represents how one experience of gender at work in the classroom impacts several different people. I hope experimenting with varying narrative techniques may convey an interdependence in the text itself that better speaks to how student and teacher experience cannot be so discretely separated.

Further elucidation of each of the four modes of change from the philosophical model of transformation is another concern for future research. Now that chapter 3 makes sense of each of these four modes in relation to one another, I am interested in fleshing out each mode in more theoretical and practical detail. I hope that this work going deeper into each mode of change will only continue to strengthen our organized efforts to resist oppression. Both the first and second implication are an invitation for future research from any contributor. Multiple perspectives, theoretical frameworks and positionalities would only buttress our study of gender at work in schools.



A last implication for my future research takes up the fourth mode of change (epistems/imaginaries) specifically and in relation to transformations of my own language, gender and identity over the course of this project. During the last year and half I formalized my own learning of my mother's indigenous language from the arctic circle, my heritage language, that I did not learn growing up<sup>21</sup>. With this exploration, the language I have learned has fundamentally shifted my thoughts and embodiments of my own gender. For example, early on I learned that there are no gendered pronouns in my Davvisámegiella. "He", "she" and "they" are one word ("sun"). As a direct result of this discovery, I began using all three pronouns in English (they, she and he) as my pronouns of reference. News came in June 2021 from multiple of Canada's Indigenous boarding schools about the digging up of thousands of children's bones. Part of my experience as an American-born mixed ethnicity person reckoning with the inarticulably atrocious reality of the boarding school system looked like my learning about a curriculum of gender forced upon my grandfather in boarding school when his language and culture were taken away from him. At this time, I also chose to enroll in my grandfather's indigenous band (siida), one connection to a place I have never visited before and cannot travel to at this time due to covid. I am interested in how my ways of knowing the world and how I imagine the world can become will shift as I continue to learn my heritage language, and perhaps even how my embodiments would shift if I were able to travel to the arctic circle. I see this potential project as research in modes of resistance--one that compels me greatly, but that I can make no hypotheses on the outcome.

### **Implications for Praxis**

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In addition to clear limitations, as well as implications for future research, I hope these chapters are useful to teacher-candidates and philosophers of education. The shared implication we can take away from these three chapters in concert is: let us talk, act, organize and imagine gender differently and divergently in schools. Let us practice. Let us try again. Luckily, young people will always lead the way. The role of the teacher is to keep learning, relearning, unlearning.

Thank you for your time and attention to these considerations on gender in schools and four modes of transformation.

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